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BLUE LINE PRO'S

# SKETCH

NO. 14

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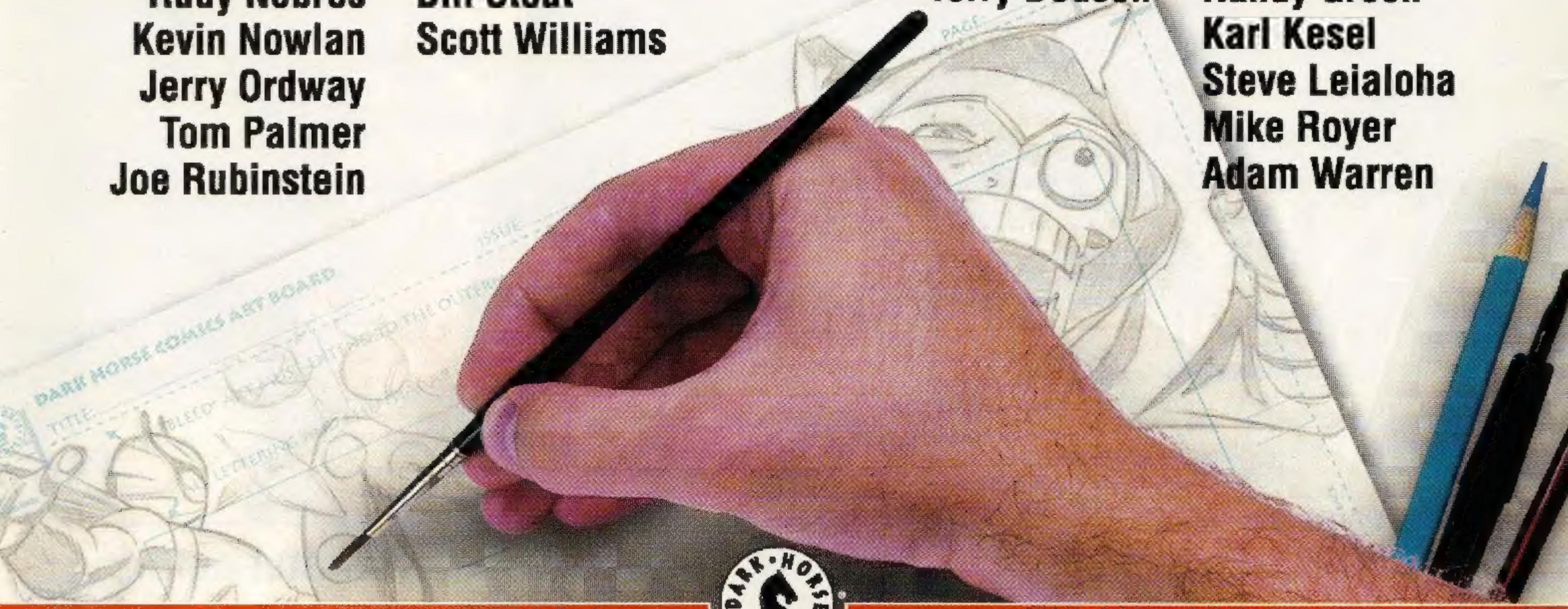
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A very important event for the comic book community is about to happen.

How many of you have heard of FREE COMIC BOOK DAY? It happens May 4, 2002. The concept is that your local comic book store is to be supplied with comics, to be given away - FREE - on this special day.

I'm not personally a member of the audience this day is planned for, as I faithfully buy comics every week (and have over my many years and years as a comic fan and publisher) - but when I first heard of the event's concept I thought it was a wonderful idea - after all, who *wouldn't* want FREE comics?! I immediately decided to donate over 10,000 miscellaneous back issues of *Sketch* in an effort to help this worthwhile event.

Stores will receive plenty of comics - now the storeowners must determine how they can best interest and attract people to this event. After talking to our local retailer, Comic Book World, I realized that getting the books are the easy part: this effort to expand the comic-book reading audience only works if the FREE comics are handed to people who currently do not read comics. Though the onus of promoting special events is sometimes lighter on retailers located in heavily trafficked areas such as malls, shop owners from chains to stand-alone stores must now determine how to promote FCBD. Is simply putting more money into advertising in the hope of attracting new customers the answer?

Don't get me wrong, I believe any event that will bring people in to take a look at comics is a great thing, and much more than just a quick fix. I'm just saying this only works if we *all* help. Every one -professionals and fans, as well as the retailers - must look to see what they can do to help these events succeed. See if your store wants to do a store signing, or give your retailer a hand by passing out FREE COMIC DAY fliers to promote the event at your local coffee bar or someplace (are there still coffee bars?). Advertising alone won't do it, so please see if there's something *you* can do to help convert new people into comic book readers.

Now to this issue...the great Neil Gaiman chats with Bill Baker, letting us in on what it took for him to succeed in his writing career, and how he continues to spin his magic. Later, Pam Bliss not only tells us how she does her own mini-comics, we then get to make one with an interactive Bliss sample. ABC's Hilary Barta discusses penciling and inking comics and Franchesco creates zipatone in Photoshop - and that's only this issue's lineup of newbies. Beau Smith, Tom Bierbaum, Chuck Dixon, Aaron Hübrich, and Paul Sizer all make welcome return visits, continuing to share with us their vast comic book knowledge.

Next issue... *STAR WARS* comic book artist Jan Duursema...

Take care,

Bob

[bob@bluelinepro.com](mailto:bob@bluelinepro.com)



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# BLUE LINE PRO'S SKETCH

VOL. 3 NUMBER 2 - ISSUE #14  
ISSN: 1536-7932



### Bob Hickey

Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, he has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele. He currently has a new Blood and Roses series in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger which both should be appearing at BLP Comics.

Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.  
[www.bluelinepro.com](http://www.bluelinepro.com)  
He can be reached at bob@bluelinepro.com



### Beau Smith

Beau created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and the upcoming cross over-Xena/Wonder Woman and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse.  
[www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown](http://www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown)



### Tom Bierbaum,

Tom with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.



### Flint Henry

WizKids/Mage Knight, Ral Partha, and other companies utilize the fantastical concepts pulsating from his Nyarlathopean pencil point - icing on the appendage after more than a decade of delineating disturbed, dark, and violent characters such as Grimjack, Lawdog, Manbat, and the occasional demonic Batman.



### M² a.k.a. Mike Maydak

M² has been taken under-wing as the padawan in training at the Blue Line Pro ranch. He is learning much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work.



### Chuck Dixon

After a seemingly endless Bat-œuvre - including Detective, Robin, and seminal work on Nightwing and Birds of Prey - Chuck Dixon leaves the darkness of Gotham, taking his particularly prolific and professional wave of storytelling to join the warm and sunny waters of CrossGen.



### Franchesco

Born in Carbonara, Italy, the super-enthusiastic Franchesco now works his art from Chicago. He's penciled stories for Green Lantern Corps Quarterly, What If, and Fusion Force (also co-creating), as well as plenty of posters, pin-ups, covers, and trading cards for Marvel, Image, DC, Lucasfilms, Harris, and Topps. Look out for the all-Franchesco project XSTACY, coming soon from the Fresco Studio.  
[www.franchesco.com](http://www.franchesco.com)



### Pam Bliss

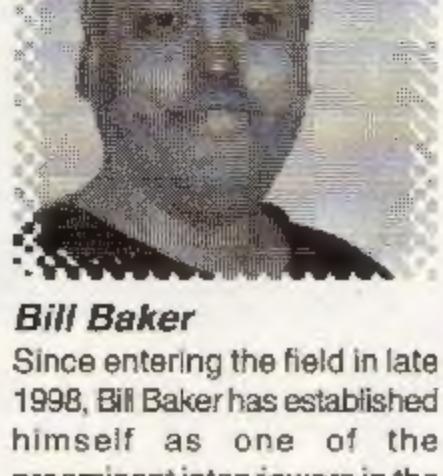
Pam lives in Northwest Indiana with her husband Nick, their Welsh corgi dogs, and an assortment of projects in various stages of completion. When she's not at the drawing board, she's walking the dogs, watching documentaries on TV, collecting trivia, and reading history, science fiction, and other people's comics. She published her first Paradise Valley minicomics in 1989, and she hasn't stopped yet. In 2001, Dog & Pony Show, her first trade paperback collection, was released. More than anything, Pam tries to tell a good story, and live up to the Paradise Valley Comics motto: "Honest comics since 1989".



### Aaron Hubrich

Aaron was going to be the next great fantasy painter, but something caught his eye in college - comics! From then on he never looked back, focusing on making an impact on the comic book industry. In the 90's he learned a lot by self publishing, and working for several larger publishers. A few years ago, he became interested in digital coloring, and is now contributing his skills to major publishers.

With the help of BlueLine, Aaron is publishing a book showing the step by step process on how to make comic book come to life using Photoshop to color it. If you were ever interested in how to color for comics, then you really need to check out this book!



### Bill Baker

Since entering the field in late 1998, Bill Baker has established himself as one of the preeminent interviewers in the comics journalism community. After getting his start as a reporter on a now-defunct website, he graduated to doing both long and short form interviews for two of the best known comic book sites on the web, Comic Book Resources and Wizard World. This lead to his articles and interviews appearing in print magazines, including *Comic Book Marketplace* and *Comic Buyers' Guide*, as well as *Fantastic Visions: The Art of Matt Busch*, published by Avatar Press in 2001.

Bill's work combines a wide-ranging knowledge of both the art form and its practitioners with a deep and abiding respect for its rich history. If there's any single aspect that sets Bill's work apart from most reportage, it's the relaxed, conversational tone that pervades his interviews.



### Hilary Barta

Hilary is a longtime comic book artist and writer. A few of the many titles he's worked on are *What The...?*, *Plastic Man*, and *Stupid*. He is currently drawing *Splash Brannigan* for *Tomorrow Stories* from ABC, and drawing *Radioactive Man* and writing and drawing a Halloween story for Bongo Comics.



### Mitch Byrd

Mitch's pencils have wowed everyone, from the sci-fi superhero Guy Gardner crowd to the extreme-evisceration indulgers of Verotik comics. Enjoy his attractive, lighthearted art with our Sketch exclusives.

### What Are You Doing?

Whether you are a professional actively engaged in the field, passed through the industry doors on some level at a time in the past, or are looking to get involved with the comic book business in the future, please drop us a line - in this medium we all love, we want to hear from everybody. The Sketch letters forum is always open, and open to all! Let us know what you think about Sketch, topics and creators you'd like to see covered, or new features you'd like to see. Voice your opinions about the industry, share your industry-related experiences with others, or share your tips with the Sketch audience.

# BLUE LINE PRO'S SKETCH

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**Bob Hickey** creative director/publisher

**Flint Henry** senior editor

**Mike Maydak** associate editor, letters

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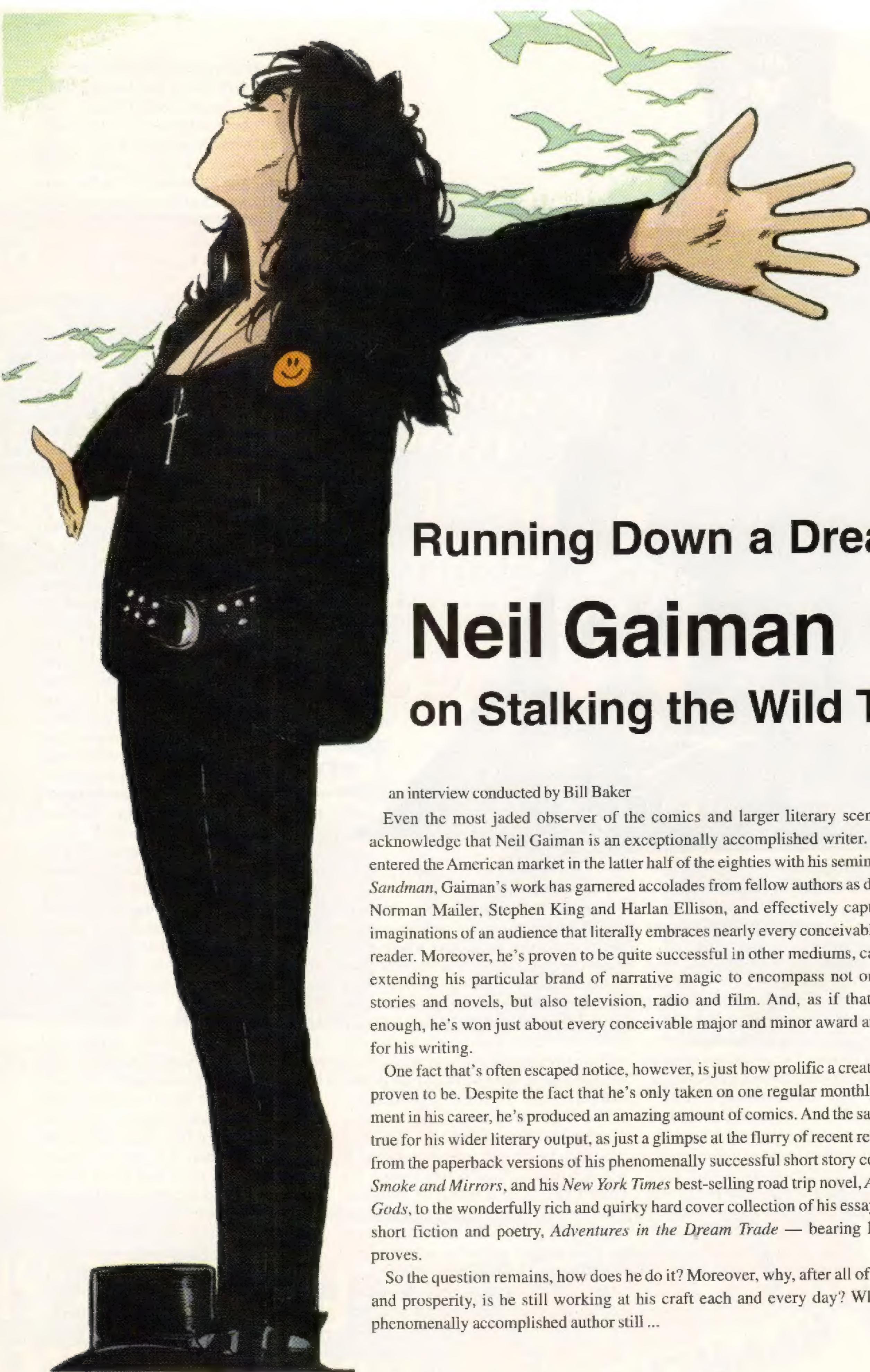
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Comic books are a fun medium! Blue Line Productions' goals are aimed toward enhancing this art form - and others - through knowledge and quality art supplies. We try hard to make certain that you, the reader, have the comic book technique information you require for your personal enjoyment of this great field.

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# Running Down a Dream

# Neil Gaiman

## on Stalking the Wild Tale

an interview conducted by Bill Baker

Even the most jaded observer of the comics and larger literary scene has to acknowledge that Neil Gaiman is an exceptionally accomplished writer. Since he entered the American market in the latter half of the eighties with his seminal series, *Sandman*, Gaiman's work has garnered accolades from fellow authors as diverse as Norman Mailer, Stephen King and Harlan Ellison, and effectively captured the imaginations of an audience that literally embraces nearly every conceivable type of reader. Moreover, he's proven to be quite successful in other mediums, capable of extending his particular brand of narrative magic to encompass not only short stories and novels, but also television, radio and film. And, as if that weren't enough, he's won just about every conceivable major and minor award and honor for his writing.

One fact that's often escaped notice, however, is just how prolific a creator he has proven to be. Despite the fact that he's only taken on one regular monthly assignment in his career, he's produced an amazing amount of comics. And the same holds true for his wider literary output, as just a glimpse at the flurry of recent releases — from the paperback versions of his phenomenally successful short story collection, *Smoke and Mirrors*, and his *New York Times* best-selling road trip novel, *American Gods*, to the wonderfully rich and quirky hard cover collection of his essays, short-short fiction and poetry, *Adventures in the Dream Trade* — bearing his name proves.

So the question remains, how does he do it? Moreover, why, after all of this time and prosperity, is he still working at his craft each and every day? Why is this phenomenally accomplished author still ...



**Sketch:** When did you first become enamored with story telling? Was there a particular moment that you remember it happening, or was it more of a gradual process?

**Neil Gaiman:** No. I think it was hard wired. I remember, as a kid, I would daydream about being a writer at the kind of age when kids are *really* meant to daydream about being astronauts, or train drivers, or firemen. I never had any of those daydreams. My daydreams were always, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a writer?" Only it never occurred to me I could do it by writing, because I was a kid, I guess.

But that is what I always wanted to be. Those were my daydreams. I wish there was one cool, blinding moment that I could [point to and] say, "Before this, I didn't know that stories were what I wanted, and after it..." I think it goes as far back as I can remember, which is a very long way.

**Sketch:** What about story telling really appeals to you? Is it the whole act of

creation, the fact that, in a sense, you're transforming reality?

**Gaiman:** No, I think a lot of it... In many ways, the biggest thing, and the coolest thing, is creating something where there wasn't anything before. The magic of story telling, you don't get to do it that often in your life, even as a successful writer, even as a fairly prolific writer. But, every now and then, you can give people stories that will change the way they see things. And that, of course, isn't why you do it. But that part is kind of cool, kind of strange.

The thing that I love is the way that "Dream of a Thousand Cats" (*Sandman* #18) didn't exist before I wrote it. And it was barely in my head before I wrote it. I knew I had to do a bunch of *Sandman* short stories, because I'd decided to do some short stories to get some ideas out of my head before I started the next big, long story line. And I was driving to the railway station, which happened to be at Gatwick Airport. It's about a half-hour drive through narrow country roads. And I saw a large

cat sitting on the side of the road, very big, and very, very black, just looking like a little patch of night. And I thought, "You know, if the Sandman was a cat, that's what the character would look like." And I thought, "There's a story! I think I'll tell that one." The following four or five days later, I sat down and wrote it in a weekend. Which might sound incredibly odd, because normally it would take me something in the region, at that point, of about two to three weeks and, later on, four to five weeks to write a *Sandman* story.

Like I say, it's that moment of creation, the moment where there wasn't something where you began and now, suddenly, there's something cool that is. I suppose [stories are] always like a kid. You know, they grow up, and go out in the world, and do their own thing. And that's what I love about stories, because they do that, too, sometimes.

**Sketch:** When did you actually start writing things down?

**Gaiman:** God, I remember when I was around three getting my mum and dictating a poem to her — it wasn't very good, no surprise — and making her write it down. Telling her, "You write this down!" And she did. And then, as a kid, English [class] was what I loved. English essays, stories. And it was fun. I'd get to write. I'd get to sit there in English pretending I was Robert E. Howard, or who ever I was reading that week. I mean, I'm a nine-year-old writing Michael Moorcock stories, or whatever.

And then, when I was about thirteen, I started doing comics. I'd just write and draw these fairly terrible comics which, by the time I was about fourteen, they were sort of [looking like the work of] somebody who wanted his stuff to look like Barry Smith, but couldn't be bothered to learn all the drawing stuff underneath. So I'd do all the sort of odd Barry Smith-shaped noses, or Barry Windsor-Smith, as he wasn't yet known at that point. And then...

It's very odd right now. A few nights ago, I just ran out of things to read to my daughter, who is seven. Suddenly I remembered that I'd written a kid's book, a kid's novel (*My Great Aunt Ermintrude*), when I was about twenty-one, and went and did a quick hunt in the attic, and found it. It was the very first thing, full-length thing, I'd finished. I'd sent it off to a publisher at the time, and got it just as smartly back, and said [to myself], even at the time I'd gone, "This is one of those 'first novel' things. Everybody should write a first novel and put it away." So I did.

But I pulled it out to read to Maddy because I figure after twenty years you can't be embarrassed by things you did

wrong, and things you didn't know how to do, and I couldn't even really remember the plot. I've been reading it to her, a few chapters a night, and what has been fascinating is that I expected to be mortified and embarrassed all the way through. [But,] actually, what I wound up doing is being incredibly, pleasantly surprised every time a twenty-one-year old me did *anything* good. Which was actually quite often.

Like I said, I had no idea at all about structure. I also had *no* idea about doing a second draft. I sat there and wrote the book in hand writing, and then typed it out and taught myself to type at the same time. And actually, because I finished writing the book before I finished this "Teach Yourself Typing" manual I'd bought myself, I'm still, to this day, about a six finger typist because I only got up to about lesson six, and then it was time to start typing my book. I often wish I'd finished the manual.

**Sketch:** I was just thinking about some of your past interviews, and in one of them you were talking about the fact that it's sometimes hard to tell, afterwards, what were the easy parts and what were the rough patches when you were working on them.

**Gaiman:** [Laughter] When you're working, you have *no* idea. And when you're working, and you're actually doing it, you're out there in the swamp, trying to jump from a little tussock of earth and dry ground to another little tussock three or four feet away, knowing between you and that tussock there is nothing but quicksand. And it's a very nervous, strange, awkward jumping *thing* at which the possibility and the probability of failure, and eternal distraction, is lurking behind everything.

From a distance, for other people and, in fact, in memory, it *doesn't* look like you're stumbling through a swamp. It looks like you are striding confidently through what is obviously solid ground. And, of course, you're not.

For me, the strangest of all of those is my book *Coraline*, which comes out this summer (September, 2002). It's a short novel, 30,000 words, which is exactly half the length of an adult novel. It's a book that, literally, took me ten years to write. I wrote a big chunk of it in 1990 and '91, the first 8,000 words, and then wasn't sure what happened. And then picked it up again about '97, and did the next 2,200 words between then and April-May, 2000, sometimes doing 50 words a night.

At one point I was meant to have seriously begun *American Gods*, and I'd arranged for a train journey to San Diego. I *love* long train journeys, because nobody can even get a hold of you. Your mobile phone doesn't work, so you're off and you're working and there's nothing else

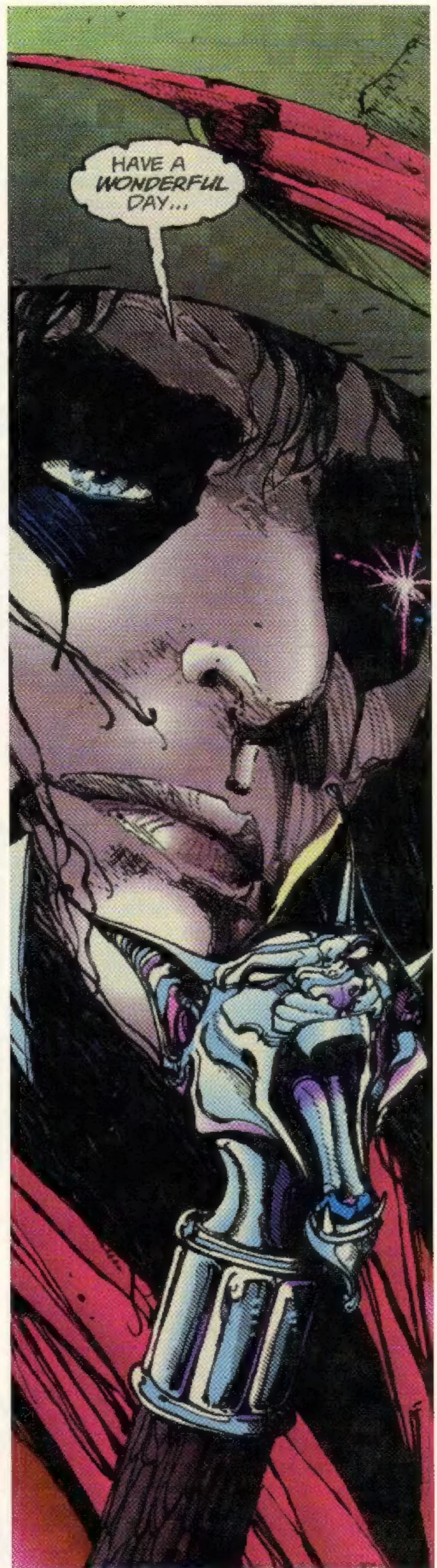
you can do. And I got on the train and I discovered the *American Gods* stuff that I was meant to take with me wasn't with me. So I had three days of traveling, and quietly wrote *Coraline* through that. And even once I'd finished it, in 2000, my English editor felt there was a chapter missing. She said, "What happened to *this* character?" And I said, "Ah. You know, you're right!" I knew, and I never put it in there. So I settled down in October of last year and wrote the other chapter in a couple of days.

And the only reason I'm talking about the incredibly long, convoluted, peculiar way this thing was written is, it's *seamless*. You wouldn't look at it and go, "This was written in these tiny fits and starts and peculiar lumps over a period of, quite literally, ten years. Maybe eleven." You sit there at the beginning, and read it all the way through to the end, and it seems so much of a piece that the building process behind it is invisible. And frankly, when I was doing the copy editing last week — the galley proofs came in and I gave them a read through — and it was invisible to me. It was just all, very obviously, all one thing, one story. Does that clarify that?

**Sketch:** Quite a bit. And it leads to the next question, which is that you seem to have a very different writing process than is typically taught, especially in America. We're often told as students that you have to outline everything beforehand, and get it all nailed down beforehand, and then you write it.

**Gaiman:** I did that *once*. I did it with *Black Orchid*, and didn't really enjoy it terribly. I mean I liked it insofar as it felt like all I had to do was write the scenes one after another. I wouldn't get up in the morning not knowing what the next scene was. On the other hand, there was precious little fun in it, and there wasn't any moment that I surprised myself in *Black Orchid*. I *may* have surprised myself towards the end. Book Three, I think, may have felt a little strange. I may have done stuff that wasn't actually in the outline, I'd have to go back and find it to see. Basically it was all planned out, it was all outlined.

My favorite outline moment was when I wrote a *Babylon 5* episode for Joe Straczynski, called "Day of the Dead," a couple years ago. Joe had been after me for five years to write him an episode, and I *finally* had time. And I said, "OK, I can do it!" I said, "I've got an idea," and I told him my idea. And he said, "Hm, I like that. Let me run it by the producers." He rang me back the next day and he said, "I ran it by the producers. They like it." And I said, "OK, great. Shall I write you an outline now?" And there was a pause. Joe said, "Do you *like* writing outlines?" And I said,



"No." And he said, "Neither do I." And I said, "In which case, I have one question." And he said, "Forty-three pages," without missing a beat.

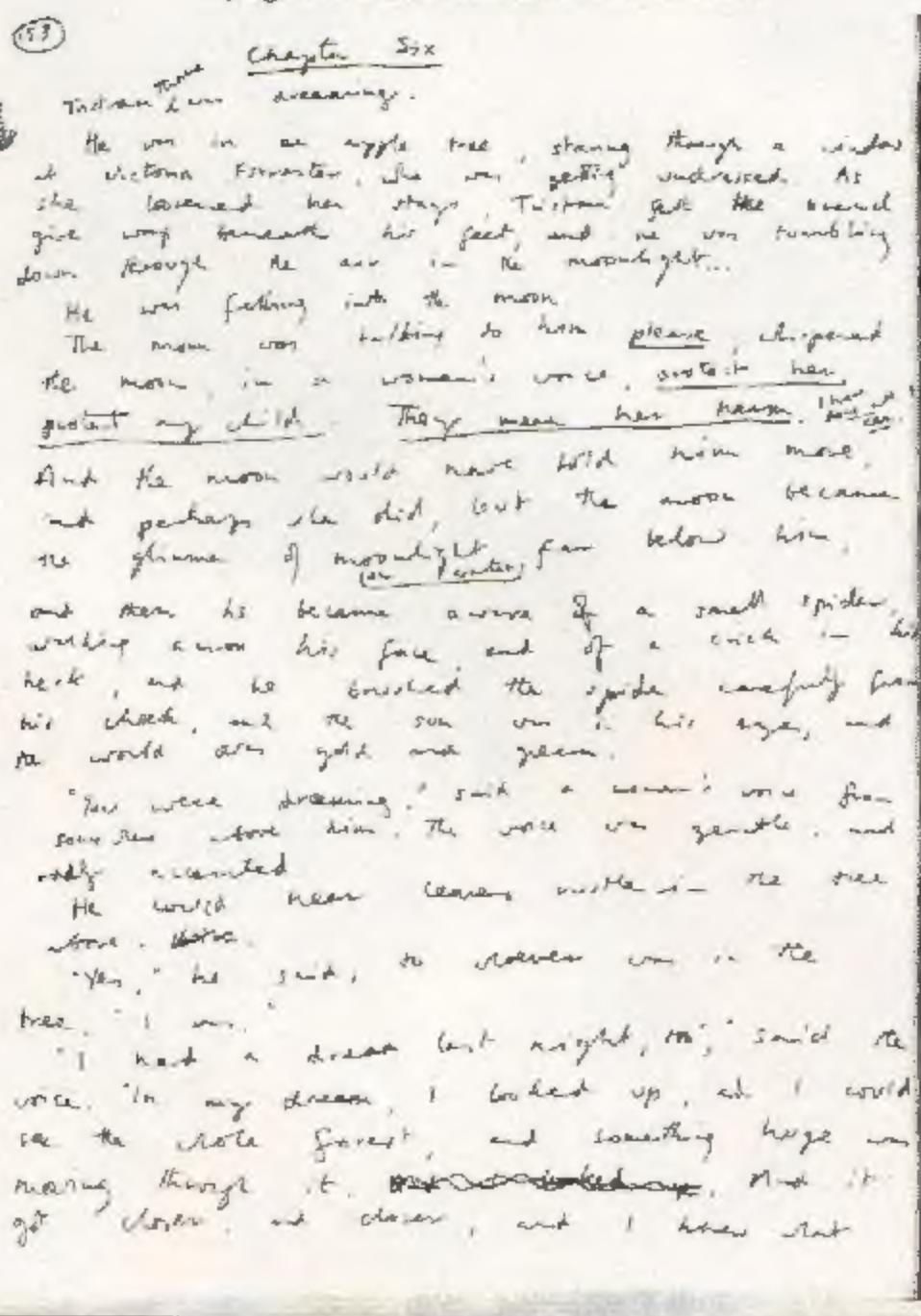
Outlines, I think, are fun when they're useful. Like with this Marvel thing that I'm currently doing, or just about to start. I'm putting together, before I actually start writing, I should have a little map of, more or less, what occurs in each of the six issues. Only because I don't want to suddenly get to issue five and realize that I now have another four issues worth of stuff to do. Which is what I tended to do in *Sandman*. Which is something that you have that liberty to do in a monthly comic like *Sandman*. I'd start something and I'd go, "Oh, I think this is going to be like five issues long." And then, all of a sudden, you look up sixteen months later and you've done "The Kindly Ones."

**Sketch:** Well, why don't we talk about your writing process? It really is kind of an act of exploration for you, isn't it?

**Gaiman:** Mostly, yes. It drives editors nuts. A lot of the time it can be an accumulation. You are thinking about things, planning things. If you know you're writing a story about something, everything that you run into that seems to be concerned with that pops in your head into a sort of box with that kind of shape.

I'm right now doing a *Sandman: Endless Nights* short story collection, which is kind of fun. The first thing for me, on that, was knowing who my artists were, because in each case knowing the artist then shaped what the story was going to be. The first story I had to do was a

A page from Neil Gaiman's STARDUST.



Death story. I knew I had Moebius. Moebius seemed perfect for Death, and I was running through various ideas in my head. And then I wound up spending about a day and a half in Venice on my way to Trieste earlier this year, immediately after September the 11th, when the planes started flying again. And I was having a conversation with somebody in Trieste, and they were talking about "empty islands," some of these islands in the lagoon that are empty. And the day before I walked into a book shop, and noticed a little Moebius sketchbook of drawings of Venice.

And that sort of combined in my head with some stuff I'd read about five years ago. I found myself reading *The Memoirs of Casanova*, and actually wound up reading them twice. I read the first round because it was translated and written by a guy called Arthur Machen, a writer I like. And then I realized that he was working from an expurgated text, and the complete text was only around now. Most of it was expurgated for reasons of religion, not of sex, but I read them again. These huge, thick books. Actually, thinking back on that, I think I had an appalling case of flu, so I was stuck in bed for a couple of weeks, sniffling and drinking hot lemon. So I had a very, very good sense of Venice in the 1750's from that, and thought it might be very interesting [to use].

And then, when I was walking through Venice, I wound up having a conversation on a bridge with a man who had a little boom box playing and, next to it, dancing on air, a little paper Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. He tried to sell me them, telling me that they were magnetically charged paper dolls, at five dollars each, and they would dance on air. And I told him it looked actually like they were dancing on an invisible monofilament, and being jiggled up and down by a motor in his shopping bag placed next to the boom box, and he suggested that I go away.

And I thought, "There's a wonderful metaphor." You know, things dancing on invisible strings. And I thought, "Now, that's a *Sandman* metaphor if ever I had one." And, at that point, it was merely a matter of writing the story. I knew, when I sat down, that it was a story with all of those things in it. I knew that it was for Moebius, and that it would have a sort of strange correlation of walking and moving backwards and forwards between the 1750's and now. The thing is, writers use phrases after that, like, "And after that, it just wrote itself," which tries to make light of the fact that you then, in my case, spend about fourteen-fifteen days trying to craft that material into a story, and getting the beats, and understanding why it's a comic.

And writing very nervously for Moebius, who is, after all, a genius.

And, as soon as you're finished, it looks like you were striding confidently through that swamp. It doesn't look like you were jumping from tussock to tussock. [General laughter] And I wound up writing a story I was *really* proud of; of a man, in the here and now, who may or may not be a military assassin — we're never quite sure — who winds up on this deserted island where he went once as a small kid and encountered Death, and this strange palace on the island where they just have this one day in 1759, over and over again. At three o'clock every afternoon, the same doves fly across the island. But they do different things. One day they may have an orgy. The next, they may spend the entire day sort of being flogged and confessing their sins to the monks in the monastery across the way. It actually begins with an elephant being lead up the steps of the palazzo, because the guy who owns it has announced he thinks it'd be the height of pleasure to be killed by having an elephant sit on you while you're making love to two beautiful virgins. And the joke in Venice at that point is that they had a harder time finding the two beautiful virgins than they did the elephant. Afterwards, everyone agrees it was most amusing.

**Sketch:** Do you still typically work on the computer when writing?

**Gaiman:** It depends. For me, writing is a process of outwitting the process of *not* writing. And computers these days, more and more, are designed to be entertainment boxes. And the more a computer is designed to be an entertainment box, the easier it is for me to write on other things. Or, failing that, to write out it.

I have a little office now, which I finally gave in and got a few years ago, which is not [connected to] the phone. So when I take my computer out there I can't plug it into anything, which is great. Here in the house, all the computers are plugged into the Internet, and that's plugged in to some satellite upload and download system, and any attempt to write in the house is doomed. Because the first time I want to check the spelling of an obscure word and go dig through dictionary.com, I'm then off following an interesting trail of whatever, and no work is getting done.

Like I say, for me the process is one of outwitting the process of *not* writing. So, when I moved from a typewriter to a computer, that was great, because paper wasn't getting dirty, and there was a magnificent freedom that anything I was wrote was imaginary until I pressed the "Save" key. And I liked that. These days, I'm much more likely to start in a



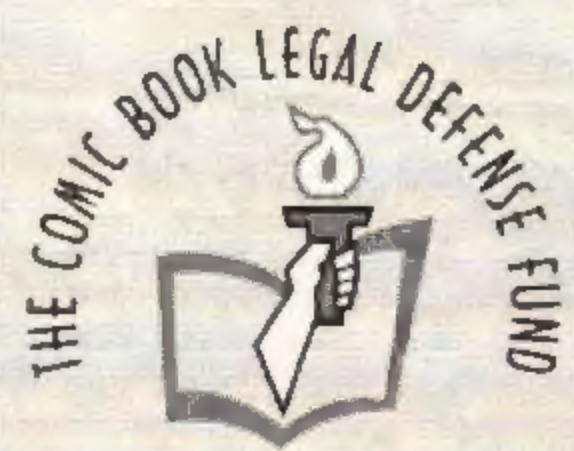
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notebook. I'm much more likely to have a fountain pen, and a little notebook, and to start writing there. Because now I'm at the point where nothing's real until I've actually started typing it in.

**Sketch:** Has that changed your work? I ask, because I'm thinking of *Stardust*, and how that book turned out.

**Gaiman:** *Stardust* was the first time I'd ever actually gone, "Right. I'm writing this in long hand." I think, particularly with *Stardust*, it changed the way that I thought sentences through. I wanted to write archaically. But then, I wound up doing the first draft of *American Gods* pretty much in long hand, in big notebooks, and I don't think you can tell.

When you're writing comics, for me, as well, you *need* a pen. Because I keep doodling out panel breakdowns, doodling out page breakdowns, looking at ways to tell the story. [Working out questions like,] "How many panels do I want per page? What kind of thing am I doing here? Am I trying something interesting? Is it gonna work?"

I'm trying something right now with this Milo Manara story, which I'm writing for the new *Sandman* book, which, when I'm done writing it, I may well do a final draft on the script — which is one of the nice things about computers — where I get rid of it altogether. Because I thought it would be really interesting to have a character in the story who keeps talking to the reader. Instead of doing it all in captions over [the art], I thought, "Wouldn't it be interesting to have somebody who's talking to us?"

A page from Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*.

(50) to rock the sprue in with  
she found herself. It was  
the fire of a boom-light;  
one wall was glass, it felt  
cold to the bare touch.  
Then she went around the room  
one more time, feeling for  
doorknobs or catches, or anything  
else.  
A spider scuttled over her hand,  
and she choked back a shriek.  
And then her hand ~~hit~~  
touched another hand, small  
and cold, and a voice  
~~said~~, "Shush! And hush! say  
nothing, for the beldam might  
be listening!"  
So Coraline said nothing.  
She felt a cold hand touch  
her face, fingers moving over  
it, ~~twitching~~ like the  
beat of butterfly wings.

As if we were an invisible camera, sort of continually breaking the fourth wall, as it were.

So I'm trying that right now, and I *think* it works. But I may well wind up sending it in to Karen [Berger, Vertigo editor] and having her say, "This really isn't going to work." And me going, "No, I didn't think so," and going back in and just making it all captions, rather than speech balloons addressed to the reader. On the other hand, it may be fun. At least it's different.

**Sketch:** Do you still create ashcans of everything, as far as comics are concerned?

**Gaiman:** Yep. Well, I say ashcans. You get four sheets of paper, fold them over, and you now have a little [version] of what the comic is going to be. You sit there and draw it all out. Actually, this *Sandman* book, I've been doing them in a big old notebook. Crossing it over, you know, four [comic pages] to a page.

But it always tells me, for example, some of the basics of comics, which is always [concerned with things like,] "When are you making somebody turn a page? When does their eye flick up? When are they turning a page? What are they turning a page *to*? Why?"

**Sketch:** When you're moving from one format to another; from a short story to a screen play, from an introductory essay to a novel or a comic, how much of a shift do you have to make mentally? Does that take some effort, or does it all seem to be just story telling, and you just fit it to the format?

**Gaiman:** There's a quote from Roger Zelazny in the beginning of the *Books of Magic* collection, where he says, "Editors think they're buying the story, but actually they're buying the way the story is told," and each of those things gives you a different vocabulary in the way the story's told. Oddly enough, some of the ones that get closest to each other for me are, for example, radio plays and comics. One of which is all visual, and the other has no visual track at all, and yet [both] have a very, very similar writing process. Short stories and novels are, on the whole, a very similar process for me, although novels are still ones I feel I have so much to learn on.

It's very strange right now. I was sent this list from *Locus* magazine, a science fiction magazine — they have an online [version], I think it's [www.locusmag.com](http://www.locusmag.com) — and they've been keeping track of all the "Year's Best" lists. And *American Gods* has made it on to more "Year's Best" lists than any other book this year. Which may just be because it was a thin year. I looked at that and I thought, "That's just wonderful. Just wait till I have it figured out, this whole

novel idea. Wait till I get one right!" [General laughter.]

*American Gods*, I liked at least some of it. I felt that I'm getting there, I'm starting to understand what I'm doing. And it was actually fun in *American Gods* because I actually stole a bunch of things from *Sandman*. There's all these *things* I made up while I was writing *Sandman*, including moving into short stories whenever I needed to comment on the main text, and inform it, while not actually keeping that story going, and doing these strange little historical short stories. [So] I thought, "Well, I'll do some of that in this novel," and did, which was great fun. But, again, I don't actually feel yet that I've figured out the craft of writing the novel, and I have quite a way to go.

Short stories are fun because you can see the end of them when you begin. Normally, for me, a short story is actually in the tone of voice. If you have an idea, and you have a voice for that idea, whether it's a narrative voice or a character's voice, you pretty much have a short story.

**Sketch:** It's almost literally transcribing what they're telling you, then?

**Gaiman:** Yeah. Well, that implies there are mysterious voices out there sort of talking to you and you're not doing it. Of course you're doing it. But, very often, if you have a character's voice, or you have a narrator's voice, whatever medium you're in you can navigate your way through. It's the equivalent of the walking stick for that mysterious and mythical swamp we were talking about at the beginning. Those short stories that I've written the first page of, or paragraph of, and never got back to, tend to be because the voice is wrong, or tend to sometimes because the voice isn't right, or the tone isn't right for the story. Sometimes it's fixable.

In the case of children's books, there's a book called *The Wolves in the Walls*, which I should hope comes out in the next eighteen months. I finished it about two years ago, and it sits waiting for Dave McKean to get the time to do sixty drawings for it. *The Wolves in the Walls* is a book where I had the idea for the story and tried writing the story once, and it didn't work. And I wrote the whole thing all the way through. And it was short enough, and it was a kid's book, [that] I thought, "You know, what I think I'll do is try again in about six month's time." And six months after that I sat down and wrote three or four paragraphs and thought, "Naw, that's not it yet." And six months after that, I thought, "I think I have an idea now. I think I know the tone of voice," and sat down, and just wrote it either that afternoon, or over two days, all the way through.

And I have no idea if it took me seven hours to write. I think it probably took me three or four years to write. But a lot of that three or four years was just figuring out, somewhere on the inside, what the story sounded like, what the narrative tone of voice was. It's very, very dry. It's very flat. You know, *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* is told by the kid who swapped his dad for two goldfish, pretty much from his point of view. *The Wolves in the Walls* [uses this] just wonderfully dry sort of narrative voice, which is, "I'm un-surprised by anything. Even the fact that there's wolves living in the walls of this girl's house."

**Sketch:** *It works wonderfully live. I was lucky enough to be at one of your readings when you pulled that piece out.*

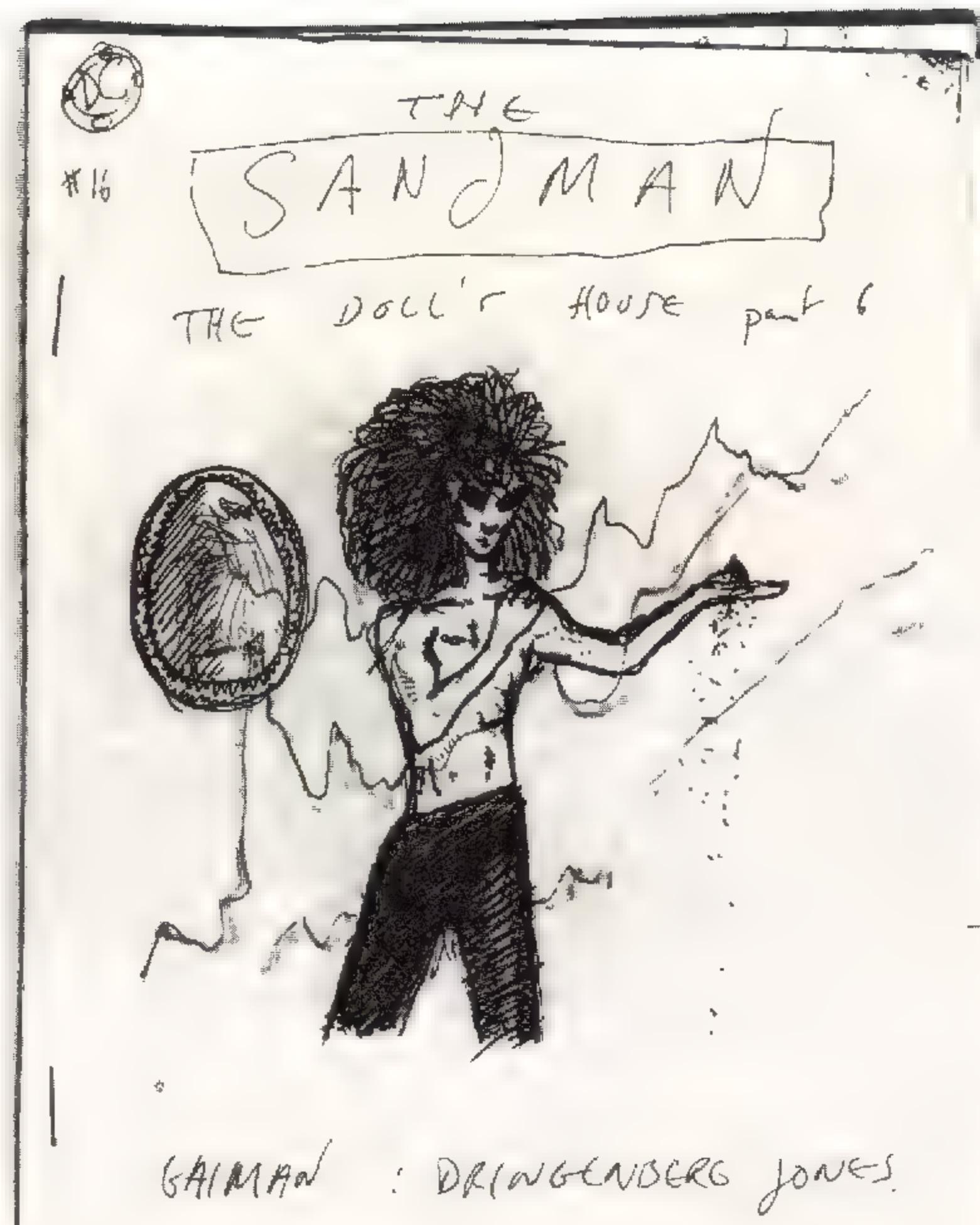
**Gaiman:** Oh, good. It's one of those things that's very, very funny live. And it's very funny because the narrator never makes any jokes. [General laughter] The whole story is completely deadpan

And, as I say, it took me as long to write it, more or less, as it does to read it. But there's at least one complete, and several incomplete, attempts to write it before that, where I knew what the story was, but I just didn't hit the tone. And, sometimes, that's the best way of doing something. Sometimes you have to be willing to put a story aside, to say, "It doesn't work. But there's something there that does work. I'll come back and I'll try it again," and not to look at the early drafts when it's time to start again, not to look at your notes. Just to assume that it's been quietly composting down in the back of your head.

**Sketch:** *I know that you usually have two or three things you work on simultaneously, and had been wondering how you moved between them. So you don't necessarily look at what's come before, but just dive right back in where you left off, and continue writing at that point, when you return to a piece?*

**Gaiman:** Yeah. [Laughter] I say that; that's not necessarily true. If I'm on the computer, normally I'll look something over. Maybe not from the beginning. Maybe from a page or so from before, and I'll fiddle with it, as my way of getting back into it. In the old days, I'd find it easy to have two very, very different things sitting there. Two big, full length things. Now, what I'm tending to do ...

Well, for example, yesterday I was out in my little cabin working with a Milo Manara story I'm writing on one screen, and the introduction I'm doing to the next edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* — they're bringing it out as sort of a memorial to Douglas (Adams') edition — and I'm Guest of Honor this year at the



*The SANDMAN #16 Doll's House part 6 ashcan cover artwork by Neil Gaiman*

World Horror convention in Chicago, with Gene Wolfe as a fellow Guest [of Honor], and I was asked to write an appreciation of Gene. And what was fun is I had all these things up as different windows on the computer, different screens in the word processing program. And I'd do the Manara thing until I got stuck or grumpy with it, and I'd flip to one of the others and write another paragraph about Douglas or another paragraph about Gene. And it meant that instead of going off grumpily, doing those things writers can do instead of writing, like having another cup of tea, or suddenly deciding that the wallpaper in the bathroom needs stripping, or whatever it is you can imagine, I'd just do a little of something that's not quite the same thing, and that would keep me going. And it was something else that needed to be done.

There are people out there, like Stephen King or Terry Pratchett, the guys who ... They're not even simply professionals: they're the antithesis of what Douglas Adams was. Douglas was a man who would spend years not writing books, and who took a certain amount of miserable satisfaction of only being able to write at that point in the day when he'd had as many cups of tea as you could possibly have, and as many baths as you could possibly have, in a day. And only then would he

begin to write. Whenever his life was not boring, he wouldn't be writing.

There are people out there who are very, very good at just really getting down and doing their pages every day. I'm, constitutionally and temperamentally, one of those who would love to be a Douglas Adams. And, if it wasn't for starving, [I might be]. I manage always to persuade myself to be one of those people who say, "Well, you have to do your thousand words a day. If you do a thousand words a day, then in a hundred days time, you'll have a first draft of a novel." "Well, OK." Or a hundred and eighty days for a first draft, whatever. I can do that kind of thing and keep going. I only really get in trouble when I have too many projects on the go, and I'm over-committed, and not assigning my time right.

But I've watched writers and artists over the years who really do need somebody breathing down their neck. There's an artist, who I shall not name, who I worked with first about twelve years ago on *Sandman*, who quit because he didn't like the way that he was being pestered to make deadlines, and felt, as an artist, that he should deliver stuff in his own time. He went off to another comic company, and found an editor who was very simpatico with him, and he had a graphic novel to

do, a hundred page graphic novel. And, as the years went by, he worked on this graphic novel. Whenever I'd see him he'd show me whatever the few pages he'd done that year were, and tell me very proudly how these guys didn't pester him for pages. About seven years later, the editor was fired, and the graphic novel still wasn't finished. And the guy realized that: A) it was not finished, and B) he was never going to finish it now, because nobody wanted it. And ten years had passed, and he hadn't actually done anything, or had anything published. And it's easy for that to happen, too.

Starvation is very good for stopping that from happening. But if starvation is not the problem, then it can be all too easy for a writer or an artist to *not* work. And also, I sometimes think, for many of the artists and writers I've run into, the worst thing is the quest for perfection.

There was a colorist who I wanted to work on *Sandman*. We got him the black and whites for *Sandman* #1, and he was meant to produce some color guides. [But] they weren't perfect, so he never turned them in. He finally showed them to me, about the point that *Sandman* #3 came out, and it was being colored by somebody else. This guy was better, but he never got to work on it because he had been off on some strange quest for perfection that didn't actually involve produced stuff.

So there always comes a point where you go, "Is this perfect, or." "And it never will be, so you may as well move on. Get it as good as you can, and then keep going. Maybe the next thing, maybe you'll get it right next time.

**Sketch:** How do you tell when your stuff is at that point? Is it almost like a "click" in your head when you look at the work, or is there some other way to tell?

**Gaiman:** Normally, for me, what actually happens is I get obsessed by the next thing. I can always tell when I'm near to finishing something, because I'm not worrying about it anymore. I'm worried about the next thing down the line. [Laughter] But, there's also a level on which, when you make art, you don't particularly spend your time worrying about whether you made art. I mean, you shouldn't. It's much wiser to be willing to move on.

With *Sandman*, when a story was twenty four pages long, and it seemed to be done, I'd send it in. Because by that point I was already worrying about what's in the next one. Writing a novel, again, I just sort of [notice,] "Now I'm starting to get worried about what the next novel's going to be." That's a very good place to be. Just sort of thinking about it.

And also knowing that the place where

most of the magic gets made is on the page. I suppose this goes back to that very first thing we were talking about right at the beginning, those things where you surprise yourself, where you're creating something from nothing. If I had to point to the one thing about being a writer that's the coolest, it's that magical moment between. It's the point where you turn a corner; you have a character walking down a corner, and you suddenly realize that, oh, darn, you've got some other characters walking down that street as well, and if he turns that corner right now, he'll run into them. So you suddenly remember, "Oh, god, I need to keep him talking on this corner!" and somebody walks up to him and, all of a sudden, you have this wonderful scene. And you have no idea of where it came from. It wasn't planned. It wasn't anything. It wasn't in your head a moment before, and now you're typing it, and you get to be the first audience.

I love that moment.

**Sketch:** You mentioned that there are some things in *American Gods* that you weren't entirely happy with earlier. Is this something that's typical for you; a sense that there's always a something, some aspect of the work that could have been better?

**Gaiman:** Oh, yeah. Except occasionally. I mean, *Coraline* I don't think I can improve. But *Coraline* is one of a very, very small number of things that I've done where I have no idea of how I did it. I don't think I could ever do it again. I'm not sure I can ever do anything quite like it again. It was barely crafted, and it came out of whatever the place [is] that the dreams come from. Writing it in the way that I wrote it is obviously a recipe for disaster.

If I were told, "OK, start a novel now that you will finish when you are in 2010, when you're 51, and keep the same narrative voice," I'd be going, "It's not going to happen!" Yet this is a novel I began when I was thirty and finished when I was forty-one. And I have no idea how I did it. So that one I look at as this weird kind of thing that I'm happy with it, because I wouldn't know how to change it. [Laughter] I don't quite know what to do with it.

But *American Gods* is something that I built, and I built it day by day for almost two years. I look at it and I go, "Well, it would be nice, in a perfect world, I think it could have been about a third again as long." It would have been even longer, even more rambling, even more intricate, had more strange diversions. We would have gone to more places and met more things. And there's an alternate universe in which I carried on writing it for three years,

instead of two. It may not have been a better book in that universe, it's certainly a bigger one. And I sometimes regret that, just because I just had so much fun writing it, and meeting all these people.

[Actually,] that's kind of an unthinking comment to say. I think, "I had such fun writing it" In actual fact, I probably had fun writing it one day in three. [General laughter] But, looking back, again, it's that "striding solidly from tussock to tussock" thing. You're going, "Oh, yes, it was wonderful. Easy process of writing." And, of course, it wasn't. When I was working on it and people would say, "Well, how's it going?" I would say, "Well, it's a lot like wrestling a grizzly bear. Some days the grizzly bear's on top. Some days I'm on top." And I was just secure in the knowledge that if I kept wrestling for eighteen months, at the end of that time I would have a book. Whether it would be a good book or not, I really didn't know. It seems like most people like it, which is very nice. It got wonderful reviews, and made the *New York Times* best seller list in hard back, and looks set to do it again in paperback, and all of these things are nice. But there was an awful lot of grizzly wrestling in there.

**Sketch:** What are some of the things that you haven't had a chance to yet that you're interested in doing someday?

**Gaiman:** Plays. I haven't done any live theater.

I woke up a couple of days ago with a structure in my head. Sometimes, a lot of the time, structure will give me the shape of the story. And, sometimes, I even wind up abandoning the structure. *Sandman* #6, "24 Hours" — the horrible one set in the diner — came from a desire at that point, [of me] going, "You know, I'm in a twenty four page comic; wouldn't it be cool to do a story called "24 Hours" in which I do one hour per page?" And then, of course, I wound up abandoning that structure slightly, because I needed six pages to set up the first hour, and many of the later hours were done in half pages. But that was the idea. I just liked the idea of doing these beats, hour by hour, through a story. And the story it generated was this nightmarish, monstrous story that probably wouldn't have existed if I hadn't thought of the structure.

[Anyway,] I woke up the other day with a structure in my head for this wonderful stage play for five characters. Actually, there are six characters, but one of them isn't there. And I thought, "Oh, well that would be so cool to write! When am I going to have time to write it?" I figure, well, maybe 2004, probably 2005. And suddenly some of the fun went out of it.

I'd love to do stage; I'd love to do live

theater. There is a real, particular magic that happens in live theater that doesn't happen in any other context. Beyond that, I'm not sure. I wish there was a tradition of radio theater, of audio plays and stuff, in America. Which there really isn't. It got interrupted in the late 1930's, and what you tend to have since is faintly nostalgic. One of the nice things about England is the BBC maintained the tradition of radio plays, which is how you get people like Douglas Adams. *Hitchhiker's Guide* was a radio show, that's what it began as. Radio is such a wonderful, vital force, and such a [good] way to do things cheaply. It's so much quicker and cheaper.

When I did my first radio play for the BBC, there was a point where we had to do a scene once, and then we knew that we were going to cut back into it, and we wanted it to be much more distant. So we did it once, and then we did it again with everybody standing three or four paces away from the microphone. And I thought, "You know, if we did that in a movie, we would have just lost half a day for set ups, re-lighting the scene, and moving all the cameras. It would have went away just like that!" [General laughter] And it took us twenty seconds; we moved everybody three steps back from the mic. I'd love to do more audio plays

I was very happy, for a couple of years, when the Sci Fi Channel website was doing these "Seeing Ear Theater" things. I did one starring Brian Dennehy and one starring Bebe Neuwirth. So I got two Tony-award winning actors; in fact, Bebe got two Tonys, so I now had a grand total of three Tony awards in my things, which was fun. And, unfortunately, "Snow, Glass, Apples" with Bebe was the last one that they ever did, because somebody noticed that these things weren't actually generating any money. They were merely only generating good will

*Sketch:* What about film, are you excited about the possibilities there?

**Gaiman:** No. [General laughter] But I'm writing film. I'm currently working on a movie for Robert Zemeckis, and working on *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and there's at least five, maybe more, projects of mine — stories, novels, comics projects

that are out there currently being transformed into film or not. But having knocked around in Hollywood for too long, [I know that] everything costs too much money. Everything involves too much waiting, indecision. The joy for me of writing a book is, if I write a book, that book will be written. When I finish *American Gods*, I do a second draft on it, and then the book comes out.

Currently I'm working on an animated project for DreamWorks, for example.

They came to me and said, "We have this classic story we'd like retold as an animated film. Would you do us an outline for it?" So I did. Then I did them another outline. Then I did them another outline. Then I did them another outline. Then I said I wasn't doing any more outlines, and they said, "Can we give you more money to do more outlines?" And I said, "I guess." [General laughter] So they threw a year's wages of a high school teacher at me, and I'm doing more outlines on this project, which I think will be fun.

But what is frustrating for me is where I would actually wind up creating it, where I make it live and where I make it work, would be writing the script. That's the bit for me that is fun. And they want everything tied

down beforehand, which I guess is their right, because they know that, when it goes beyond an outline, they have to pay me a large chunk of money to write a script, and stuff like that. And then they have to get the concept drawings done. And, from start to finish, even if we get a green light this week when I hand in the outline ... Which, actually, now I come to think of it, was the other thing I had up on my screen yesterday while I was writing. [Laughter] I thought there were two big things, not just the Manara stuff. The Manara, this outline, Douglas Adams and Gene Wolfe introductions.

It'll be five years until this thing is made. And I will probably be fired from the project at least once, and lots of other people will come in and write lots of extra dialogue and what have you. And this may just wind up creating art, and it may not. It may be a good movie, and it may not. But the things that will make it a good movie are not necessarily anything to do with me sitting writing my outline, or me writing my script. Which may sound slightly apathetic, but I think it's essentially more practical. One of the things I love about comics, I love about radio plays, I love about short stories and novels: if it works, it's my fault. If it doesn't, it's my fault. And with films, if it works, god knows whose fault it is.

*Sketch:* Right. It could just be the editor, for all we know.

**Gaiman:** There are many films in which



The SANDMAN #20 Dream Country ashcan cover by Neil Gaiman

it is the editors. And there are many films in which the editors are not to blame. I remember seeing the editor's cut of the first episode of *Neverwhere*, which made a lot of sense, and was really exciting, and worked, and was just sort of really good. And then I saw the director's cut of it, which he liked, and I didn't, and was the one broadcast. And I thought, "Isn't that interesting? The material was the same, more or less, although different takes were sometimes used. But the way that you build it together was completely different." So, yes, it could well be the editors.

*Sketch:* What do you look for in a project that's not something you generated, say something like the upcoming Marvel project, 1602, or the animated film you were just discussing? What does it take for something like that to interest you enough to become involved with it?

**Gaiman:** Pardon me, but the Marvel project is something that I generated. The Marvel project was very much for me a reaction to a bunch of stuff that was going on, particularly September the 11th, [and me] thinking, "Well, it'd be nice to do something that's not about this stuff."

What tends to happen is there's something in there that seems like it's gonna be fun. Occasionally, when I'm stuck in the middle of some hell project, looking around, blinking, and I'm going, "Well, why did I get involved in this?" the answer's always the same. Which is, "It

seemed like a good idea at the time."

Actually, thinking about the DreamWorks project, the DreamWorks project had the same rationale that several other things that I've been involved with over the years had, which is, "At least if I screw this up, at least I'll screw it up with love." Which is, more or less, what got me into *Princess Mononoke*, and was the reason I decided all those years ago to give Black Orchid an origin. I thought, "Well, somebody's going to do this. It may as well be me, because I'll do it as best as I can." [Laughter.]

And, in the case of the Zemeckis project, it's something I said "No" to for several years. It's [based upon] a book that Bob loves. And [then] I reread it, and realized why he loved it, and I realized it's all about one scene toward the end. And he flew out to Minneapolis. We had this meeting at the airport, in this little conference room, and I said, "It's all about this one scene, isn't it?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, "Oh, OK. So I can more or less throw away the rest of the book, can't I?" He said, "Yeah." And I said, "Because the only way I can do is like this: blah, blah, blah blah." And he said, "That's what I want!" And I said, "Oh, OK, good." And, thrilled by my own cleverness, I signed on. And then went on my own and thought, "What have I got myself into?" But I'm enjoying it.

**Sketch:** What do you think is really lacking in much of comics today?

**Gaiman:** I don't know. The thing that I've always wished with comics is just that there were more. More comics for more people, more different kinds of comics.

I never disliked super-hero comics, but I always figured that super-hero comics were a very small genre. What was fun [about] doing *Sandman* was, more or less, creating a genre, going, "OK, we can do fantasy comics. Look, let's do one of these things." You know, if I were doing it all over again, or if I were starting again, or if I were going to spend another five years just working exclusively in comics, I think I'd try and create more genres. Just go off and do stuff that nobody has done, necessarily. I'd love to see less reliance on super-hero comics as the commercial mainstay of comics. Which, like it or not, at the end of the day they are

I think the only thing that I wish a lot of the time is that people who are good writers would write less. I remember once getting into an argument with a writer, who I shall not name, who's another Vertigo writer, while I was working on *Sandman*. I was saying that it would take me roughly a month to write a *Sandman* script. This writer was incredulous, and explained that he or she took *maximum* of twenty four hours to write a script for his or her comic.

And explained to me very carefully that, financially, you *needed* to write however many comics it was, in however much time it was, and they worked it out mathematically. So it was a very specific thing, "OK, you can afford to spend [X amount of time on a script]." And this person was explaining to me that I was mad.

At the time, I was getting \$2000.00 a script, something like that. I was making \$2000.00 a script, and there were a few thousand dollars coming in on royalties, but I didn't think it was particularly *bad* money. It wasn't wonderful money, but I was surviving on it, it was fine. And it was explained to me that I was nuts, and financially the only way that it could possibly work was to do twenty four hours [of work, total,] spread over three days, however long to write the script

And I stopped the other day and thought about it. And I thought, "Well, everything I ever did doing *Sandman* is still in print." The books are now in their eighth, ninth, tenth printing. They sell, year in and year out, somewhere between forty and eighty thousand copies a year. Every year.

**Sketch:** And that's every individual volume, correct?

**Gaiman:** Yeah. They just keep selling, and selling, and selling. And I did the sums, and I thought, "You know, in actual fact, *Sandman*, which people didn't laugh at or sneer at, but nobody was aware of or thought of as a commercial success when I did it, if you take the trade paperback sales since, and spread them back over [the series' run] — you said, 'OK, this is what we actually sold over seventy five issues' — each issue of *Sandman* by now would have sold one and a half *million* copies." You know, we would have been doing one point five million over seventy-five issues! [General laughter] And I thought, "Which is better than any other comic would have ever done. Even at the height of the Image thing, that was for a couple of comics here or there. But we did it over seventy five." And I thought, "Actually, I did the right thing." Just quietly nestling down and taking as long as it took to get it right, and not going, "Well, I have to write X amount of things, otherwise I starve!" And there are writers out there who are capable of *terrific* work, and who are capable of *beyond* terrific work, and I go, "Well, I wish you were doing one, or maybe two projects. Look, you're writing five monthlies!"

I should probably clarify here that I'm very specifically *not* referring to Alan Moore. Who, I think, whatever he's doing at ABC is very much about writing fast comics, and just creating this wonderful, strange, self-sustaining world of

*Promethea*, and *Tom Strong*, and what have you.

But that, in terms of writing, is one of those things that I tend to wish. Which is that people would write a little less, and write a little better. The people who are capable of it.

**Sketch:** I know you've been asked this question a number of times, but, considering the venue this piece will appear in, I think it's appropriate to ask it yet again: what do you think that those people who want to become good writers need to keep in mind?

**Gaiman:** There's a bunch of different things that somebody who wants to be a writer should keep in mind, and there are different kinds of advice you give to different people. To most people, the best advice you can give somebody who says, "I want to be a writer," is *write*. And *finish* things. Because that's very often going to separate 95%, or even 99%, of the men from boys. Do you want to be a writer? Great. Write. You want to be a writer, and you have hundreds of unfinished beginnings of things in drawers? Great. Finish things. A lot of the time, that's all it'll take.

Beyond that, you're into sort of much more the second stage advice. Read everything you can, and read the kind of stuff you *don't* like. I've very grateful that for my early twenties I was a book reviewer. I had to read *everything*. I was not the kind of book reviewer who only got to read one kind of thing. I was reading everything, and it was *great*. Because I got to read all sorts of books I would *never* have gone out and paid money for. Wonderful.

The other thing that I would advise is, if you're capable of writing, and you're technically good, and you can finish things, but you don't necessarily have anything to say, is, "Good, go and *live*." Go do things. Go experience the world. Sign up on a tramp steamer, if they still have tramp steamers. I loved being a journalist in my early twenties. It was great, because you got to mix with every level of the world. It gave you a very interesting perspective. Get out there. Go places you wouldn't otherwise go. Do things you wouldn't otherwise do. And get your heart broken. Make a mess of things. Triumph over adversity. Great. Now come back. Well, at least you have something to write about.

And it's not going to be *those* things. You're never going to wind up and taking the stuff you've experienced and plunking it straight on the page. At least I hope you won't. But, by this point, the batteries should be charged. There is material.

Now, that's the kind of advice you give

somebody who's got everything else *but* that. Most people, you never get to the point of giving that piece of advice. Because most people who want to be writers, they want to be writers but they want elves to come in the middle of the night and write for them. Or they want elves to come in the middle of the night and finish things for them. Or they're sure if you just start a novel, and put it in a drawer, it'll keep writing itself in the darkness.

**Sketch:** And they all seem to end up becoming producers in Hollywood, don't they?

**Gaiman:** Many of them do.

[Assumes a pitch-perfect Hollywood drawl] "Hey! OK, Neil Gaiman. We love you; we love your stuff. Now, we have this kind of idea, OK? And we just want you to, like, do that thing you do to it? OK. So, the idea is — wait for it — it's like *Faust*, but we want, like, computers in there."

[As himself] "And the idea is?"

[In Hollywood voice] "No, that's the idea! Kinda like *Faust*, but computers in there. I don't know. Upload, download, you're the writer!"

Right.

**Sketch:** Do you want to talk about artists for a bit?

**Gaiman:** Absolutely. What would you like to know about artists?

**Sketch:** What do you think makes for a good artist? The reason I ask is because I know you have such a strong and varied knowledge of, and interest in, artists whose styles range from Mike Diana to Moebius and back.

**Gaiman:** Yeah, absolutely. What makes for an artist, for me, is some kind of personal vision, something I can tap into. The only artists that I don't particularly think about working with tend to be those guys who are the super-hero artists who are so generic that nobody notices when they're not working anymore, if you know what I mean. The ones who you don't even quite have time to register that they're this year's, or this month's, hot artist because they're not in comics anymore and, anyway, their style is the same as the last guy's. Those kind of people *tend* to leave me fairly cold, because I can't see what I can bring to it.

What I like is an artist with a personal vision, because at that point, even though the artist isn't necessarily involved with plotting, you are collaborating. You are collaborating with an artistic style. When I was talking about putting together a story for Moebius, a lot of what I put into the story had to do with what I wanted to see Moebius draw

Right now I'm doing a story for Milo Manara, and I began by listening in my head to things I want to see Manara draw. And some of them are things he draws anyway. Beautiful women. There had to be beautiful women in it. There had to be beautiful women in various states of undress in this story because Manara loves drawing that. But there are all sorts of other things that I want to do as well. And some of them, I'm going, "Well, the work of Manara's I enjoyed the most was probably *Indian Summer*," which he collaborated with Hugo Pratt on. That beautiful historical stuff. And I'd love that kind of texture, in there. And, furthermore, I remember that Fellini thing he did (*Journey to Tulum*), and it would be nice to get that kind of intensity of vision in there. So you're sort of already going, "Well, this is stuff

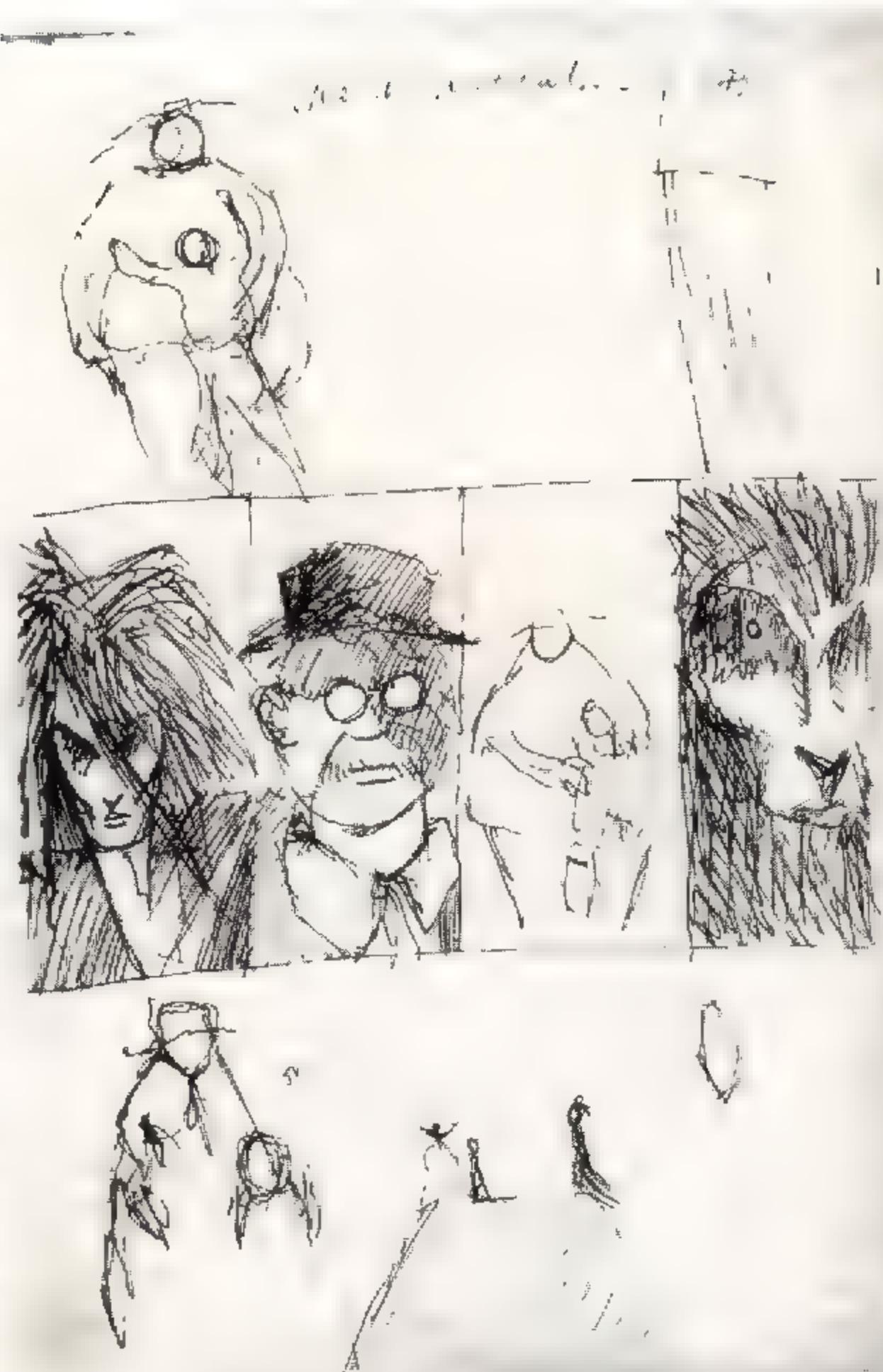
that he's done that I'm interested in. What have I never seen Manara do?" And you go, "Well, there's stuff in here that I could probably get away with in terms of long haired people hitting each other with swords," which I would never have given, say, to the late John Buscema if I'd had him drawing, because it would have been all cliché. But I'm going, "Manara never draws this! If I do this, he's actually gonna draw..." and at that point, you're thinking differently. You're thinking both for and against type.

For me, the most important question for any artist when I was starting a *Sandman* thing is ... I'd always want to talk to any artist who was doing a long story line, and I'd say, "What do you like drawing? What do you want to draw that nobody's ever written for you?" And sometimes that would be enough.

**Sketch:** What do you hope that your readers get from your work? Obviously, you hope that there's a few moments of entertainment there, but is there anything else outside of that?

**Gaiman:** I'd like, I suppose, to color their days. To change things a little. To make a very, very small amount of magic or difference.

I always hope that people who read



The *SANDMAN* #16 page 7 thumbnail roughs by Neil Gaiman

*Neverwhere*, for example, would go to England, and travel on the tube, and look up at the names on the tube, and go, "My god, these were in that book!" and wonder. With *American Gods*, a lot of it was just a feeling of, "This is the America I've been living in for ten years. Here are my eyes. This is what it looks like from in here." [Laughter] Once you've seen it through these eyes .. [for] some people it makes good audio, or whatever, and some people may think me this strange English person, and people may read the book and go, "Oh, I always wanted to put that into words." With *Sandman* it's the strangeness of actually having created something that may in some ways outlive me, and outlast me. It's much more interesting than some guy making up stories somewhere.

**Sketch:** Any last words?

**Gaiman:** No, no. I don't have any last words. Or, at least, I hope not yet. [General laughter.]

## Send Me a Guardian Angel Or The Last Guardian Angel Visitation

# Neil Gaiman

on Freedom of Expression, Censorship, and the Need for the CBLDF

an interview conducted by Bill Baker

For most of the 90's, Neil Gaiman headlined a series of personal appearances in support of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (often referred to as "the CBLDF" or simply as "the Fund"). These events, which soon became known as the Guardian Angel Tours, led to a series of sold-out readings by this popular author that served to bolster the Fund's coffers while cementing his (quite well-deserved) reputation as an entertaining, witty, and often hypnotic performer. Then, just as the last millennium was waning, Gaiman announced that he was embarking on his final tour in support of this worthy cause.

As luck would have it, I was at that time beginning my too-short tenure as a freelance journalist with *Wizard* magazine's website, and somehow landed the plum assignment of attending Gaiman's performance at the Vic Theatre in Chicago. So I stuffed my tape recorder into an overnight bag and traveled to the Windy City for what turned out to be a memorable evening of Gaiman reading from his works, both new and old, and answering the audience's questions.

Earlier, I'd interviewed Gaiman about his support of the CBLDF, and what had lead to his backing of this particular cause with such an obvious passion. His answers proved to be simultaneously enlightening and disturbing . . . particularly if you think that the CBLDF is solely concerned with protecting the rights of some shadowy perverts to buy, create, and sell "adult" or porn comics. In point of fact, if you think that there's no need for you to worry about ever being censored, or face going to trial because you only do super heroes, or you'd never do anything "dirty" .. well, you'd better brace yourself for some hard truths.

**Bill Baker:** Why did you start the *Guardian Angel Tours*, and why are you calling a halt to them?

**Neil Gaiman:** Well, it started, more or less, accidentally. It was about 1993, and I got a call from the owners of The Beguiling, a comic store in Toronto. And they said, "Why don't you come up here? We'll rent a theater, and sell tickets for the [Comic Book] Legal Defense Fund, and you can do a reading for the Defense Fund?" And I said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?" And they said, "Yeah! Joe Matt'll buy a ticket if you do!"

So I said OK. And I went and did the reading, and it was a huge success. We sold out a 500 seat theater, and I discovered that I'm good at it. I think Susan Alston, from the Legal Defense Fund, had come up to help to organize it, so she then put one on in Northhampton, (MA), at the Northhampton Theater, and that went brilliantly. And, really, we've just been doing them ever since. And it turned into this two-weeks a year tour, where I do a few locations, take a little theater, and do readings. And I enjoyed it no end.

The problem was just finding two weeks free time where I could do it. Finally, at the beginning of this year, I said to Chris Oar, the director of the Fund, "I can't do it. I can't keep doing it. I'd like to go on holiday with my children before they grow up and leave home. Finding two weeks a year to go on tour is becoming impossible."

"And," I said, "I'd also love to see more people moving in and filling the kind of ecological niche that I were to vacate. If I stop doing this, maybe other people would start getting out on the road, doing their own thing for the fund."

So, that was why we decided to do the last one, and make it a huge one, make it a big one. Which it is. It's four stops: Chicago

New York, Portland and LA.

**Bill:** Does this signal the end of your involvement in, and your efforts on behalf of, the Fund?

**Neil:** No, absolutely not! It just signals ... I just feel like seven years of going out on the road is enough. It felt like the time. And I've always been very fond of the idea of finishing in a big way when you're at the top, rather than limping on until everybody's sick of you. It was the way that we did *Sandman*. And it seemed like a very good thing to do now.

**Bill:** So we'll be seeing more things like the recent eBay auctions? (During which Neil's famous black leather jacket was sold for four figures.)

**Neil:** Yeah. I'll do more eBay stuff. I'll probably get much more directly involved with the Fund itself. But, in terms of actually gettin' out there and educating people for \$20 a ticket, I probably won't. This [will be] the last of the tours. It may not necessarily be the last time I ever actually get out in front of people and entertain them for the Legal Defense Fund, and tell them stories, or read them poems. Or it may turn out to be, if I do this again, it may turn out to be .. I may actually go on the road as a support act for, ya know, Led Zeppelin reforming. I could get out there and read stories as a support act for that one.

I'm not necessarily saying this is even the last time I get out and tell stories in public. But it feels like it's time to be done. And, again, I'd like to see more people gettin' out and doing stuff like this, themselves.

**Bill:** What sparked your interest in the Fund in the first place? I mean, come on, *Sandman* is not *Boiled Angel*. (Mike

Diana's 'zine that a Florida court found so offensive that they not only fined Diana heavily, but mandated police searches of his residence without any warrants to enforce a ruling that he could not produce art of any kind in the future . . . despite the fact that both conditions violate Diana's Constitutional rights.)

**Neil:** *Sandman* is not *Boiled Angel*. Having said that, and this occurred in about '95 or '96, well after I became involved with the Defense Fund, in Gainesville, Florida. The chief of police went into a store nearby and said [to the owner], "OK, you're selling this thing, *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and it has this seven page thing in the back, called *Death Talks About Life*, where somebody rolls a condom onto a banana, and they talk about risk factors involved in various forms of sex. And on how not to get aids. How not to get pregnant. How not to die." She said, "I don't like this. I don't want you selling this. And, if you keep on selling this, I will put you out of business." And the store owner very sensibly got in touch with the Legal Defense Fund, and the Legal Defense Fund attorney fired off a letter. And the police department laid off.

Freedom of speech, as far as I'm concerned, is an absolute. Americans seem to treat freedom of speech in the same way the English treat the Health Service. The English have the National Health Service. If you're a poor person in England, and have heart problems, you will get treated. It will not financially ruin you for the rest of your life. Or you will not have to choose between getting the heart (problem) treated, and eating. If you are severely injured in England, you go to the emergency room. It's something you take for granted. And people [there] grumble about it. They're not really sure if it's very good or not, but

they do. People actually take it for granted. In America, you have guaranteed freedom of speech for everybody. This is one of those cool things, like health care, that people take for granted when they've got it. And I think that's why, as an Englishman coming out here, I can appreciate that right. Saying that "Sandman's not *Boiled Angel*," as far as I'm concerned, diminishes the obscene behavior of the Florida court in regard to *Boiled Angel*.

Imagine that, instead of being a comics artist and writer, Mike Diana had been a novelist. And if a novelist had been [found] guilty of obscenity, and been convicted to three years suspended sentence, a \$1000 fine, psychiatric treatment at his own expense — which is something Soviet Russia was really into; enforced psychiatric treatment of dissident artists — a course in journalistic ethics at his own expense, [and] he's not allowed within ten feet of anyone under eighteen — he lost his job at a convenience store — and not allowed to draw anything that might be considered obscene, with the local police authority instructed to make 24 hour spot checks (without need of a Constitutionally required warrant) on his place of abode to make sure he wasn't writing. If that was a novelist doing that, Amnesty International would have taken that one up. He would have been on the front page of *Time* magazine. It would have been a cause celeb. Instead, a few comics people know about Mike Diana. A few civil rights and first amendment people know about the Mike Diana case.

And I remember being completely shocked when, some years ago at a convention in Charlotte, (NC), where I was there as a guest of the Legal Defense Fund, and I was doing one of these readings, and I had asked for Mike Diana to come in and introduce me [to the audience], and the convention organizer wouldn't let Mike Diana's name be written down anywhere. They wouldn't let him be mentioned over the loudspeakers. It was as if he deserved it, he brought it on himself, for drawing pictures that other people didn't like.

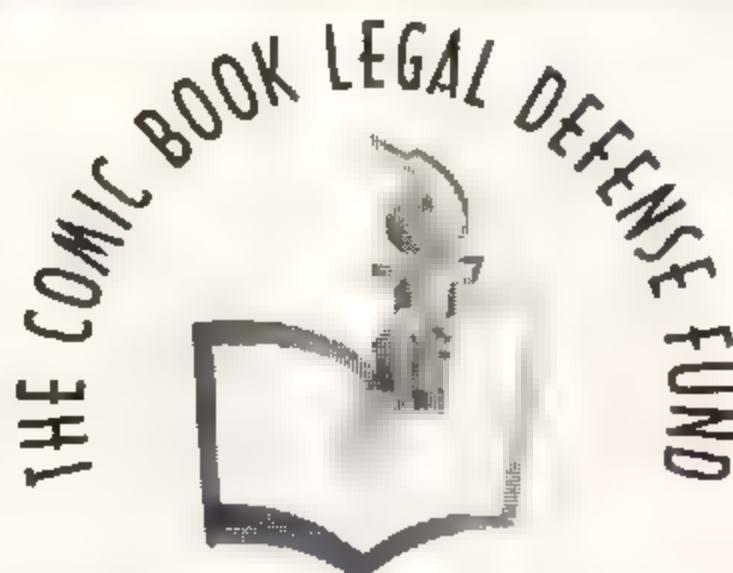
I'm sorry, freedom of speech is an absolute. The rule is, if you don't like the pictures, you don't look at them.

Let me limit that; freedom of speech to adults is an absolute. Freedom of speech to kids isn't. But, then again, *Boiled Angel* was not being sold to kids. The person it was sold to, who was the person who made the complaint, was a police officer pretending to be a fanzine fan. And I suspect that, if he was anything like the police officers I know, was reasonably unshockable.

But, there ya go. Sorry about the rant.

**Bill:** No need to apologize. This is information that most people aren't aware of, but really need to know about.

Well, given the current political climate



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*and an increasing tendency towards censorship in this country, what are your thoughts on labeling? Do you have any suggestions or solutions in this area?*

**Neil:** I wish people would label intelligently. Frank Miller, and Alan Moore, are hard-line anti-labeling people because they point out, very successfully, that it doesn't seem to do much good. A retailer in Texas was convicted six weeks ago of selling a comic labeled for over eighteen, [which was racked] in the over eighteen section of the shop, to an undercover cop who was over eighteen. As they [Miller and Moore] said, "Sure helps a lot!"

I think that intelligent labeling is probably a good thing. I only think that because there are some very stupid people out there, and there are some very stupid television reporters and such out there.

If you hand a child a box of DC comics, everything they published that month, they will go through it and pull out the ones that look appealing. And that won't be *Transmetropolitan*, and it won't be *The Dreaming*. It'll be *The Batman Adventures*, stuff that looks like it's for kids. And, frankly, if you give your typical *Wizard* reader that same box, they will probably ignore *The Dreaming*, *Lucifer*, and so on and so forth, as well. Again, because they don't look like people in colorful spandex punching each other. On the other hand, you give that box to an eighteen-year-old, they'll probably go through and that'll be the stuff they'll pull out. Because they're done on the spandex.

So, I think there's a level on which stuff self-selects anyway. Very few comics "light up" in people's hands. And, as many people point out, book stores ...you don't go into a book store and see age limits, and stuff, on the back of books, and labeling. On the other hand, things are labeled in bookstores by the way that they look, and by the place where they're positioned.

**Bill:** And also by the publishers' suggestions (concerning genre, age group, etc.)

**Neil:** Well, yeah, but I'm not even thinking of "recommended for three to nine year olds". 'Cause you have to look very closely

for those, and they're certainly not for a lot of things. But I am saying that you can pretty much tell, wandering around a bookstore, what kind of stuff you'll probably like, and what kind of stuff you won't. And, unfortunately, there is a long tradition in the world of the media of getting a bunch of comics ...

I remember one thing done with *Elektra Assassin*, the wonderful Frank Miller Bill Sienkiewicz strip. They held up *Elektra Assassin* to the camera, and then pulled back to see a display of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and *Archies*, and stuff, it was a sort of a kid's section, and they said, "This is what your kid's are reading! I bet you thought comics were this, but this is what your children are reading!"

**Bill:** Any last thoughts on what an average reader can do to help? I mean, a Neil Gaiman can go on tour, but what can your average reader as an individual - actually do?

**Neil:** Well, an average reader can become a CBLDF member. That's the basic, most simple thing. Twenty five dollars a year, it gets you a card. The card gets you into a bunch of CBLDF events. For my reading tour, for example, a CBLDF membership card will get you into the sort of pre-show mingle, meet and greet cocktail party thing, which otherwise you have to buy \$60 VIP tickets to get into. So, they'll do all kinds of cool, magical things.

Other than that, you can do simple fund raising. Somebody once pointed out that if every comic shop in America had a jar in the front, you know, the kind of jar people drop pennies, and spare change, and stuff like that into for the fund, and got it off, it would triple or quadruple the Fund's revenue. And the other thing somebody can do in the short run is come on out to one of the readings, in the Chicago, New York, Portland, or L.A. area.

[First posted on Wizard's website].

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CHUCK DIXON'S

# How to Write

## Give Your Penciler A Day Off... And Make Him Love You For It

It's the pictures, stupid.

This one is aimed more at recently established professional writers. But you tyro wannabes should listen up as well.

Even now I'm in the middle of a 32 page story. The first seventeen pages feature a massive battle between two armies with lots of characters in detailed armor. Big budget, cast of thousands stuff. It's gonna take the artist and inker at least six weeks to complete this sequence.

Trouble is, they're only allotted eight weeks. How're they gonna finish half of the book in one quarter of the time?

'Cause I'm gonna write the second half in a way that goes easy on their poor, cramped little fingers. The story is designed so the Big Event is front-loaded. Then the rest is best told using lots of repeat panels, or panels that can be photostated and repeated with minor alterations to each panel to tell the story. There are also a few all-black panels.

Each of these pages is a half-day's work at best. So the book can include some intensely super-detailed scenes, and then lay off on the artists for the rest of the issue and bring it in on time. And it's all done in a way that enhances the story and tells it best.

And you thought writing was just writing, and those poor pencil monkeys just had to draw whatever you put down. Shame on you. If you write with no regard for what trials and tribulations the penciler has to go through, then you will have very few friends in the pencil pushing community.

I was working with an artist whose wife had just had a baby, and he was falling behind schedule and the editors were baying for a fill-in issue. So I included in his book one or two pages each month that were made up of repeat panels, with minor

art changes to each. He only had to draw one panel and stat it, and then noodle a bit with the stats. In each case this bought him two or even three days on his schedule. It saved the inker a few days as well. He got back on schedule, didn't miss a paycheck, and didn't suffer the ignominy of a fill-in issue interrupting his run.

Now that I'm down at CrossGen and working in a studio environment I can put these tricks to work even more. I can sit down with the artists and talk over time saving tips or ways to get an effect across without hours of labor. Most times these are not corner-cutting measures. They actually work in a way to get more bang from the pencilers' work.

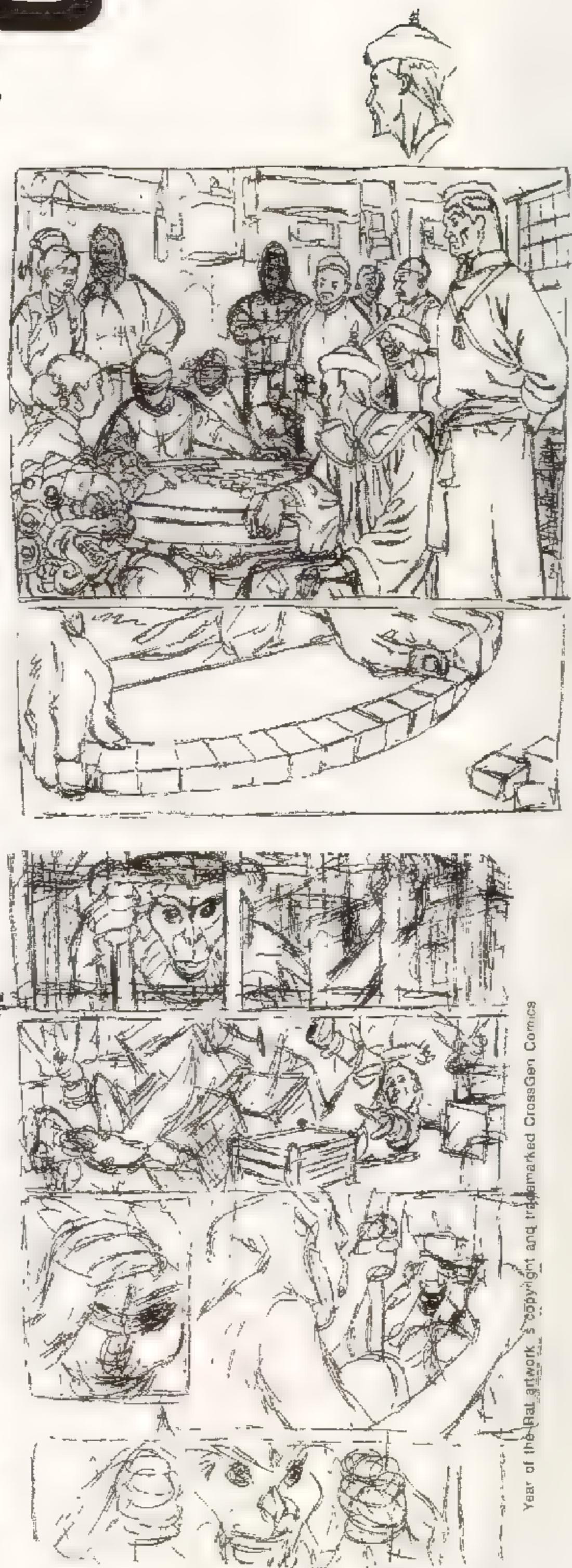
Comics master Joe Kubert teaches his theory of the "big money" panel. It's simply that one of the panels on the page should be the one you knock yourself out on. It's the eye candy for the reader. The other panels should require less work, as the big money shot carried the weight.

There's also the widely circulated "22 Comic Book Panels That Always Work," by the legendary Wally Wood. This is a simple xeroxed sheet that's been a standard for comic artists' walls for more than thirty years. It shows twenty two simple panel compositions that never fail. Stuck for a shot? Up against a deadline? Plug one of these babies in and you're gold. Don't have a copy? Ask around. Chances are *someone* you know has it at hand. It hangs in at least a half dozen cubicles here at CrossGen.

It all comes down to thinking visually. You *must* consider the art and the artist when you write comics.

You want a lot of penciler friends to call on when you're proposing a project, right?

Think about it.



Chuck Dixon's "Year Of The Rat" Layouts by Jeff Johnson



**From The Ranch**

## Pimping Can Be Easy

by Beau Smith

Pimping and promoting yourself. We've talked about it a few times here, and covered some various ways of pushing yourself to the awaiting public. This time around the horn I'm gonna talk a little about pushing your product/comic book/character

There are ways that you can do this and still not wipe out your entire savings. I've been doing it for years for myself and for the companies I've worked for...Eclipse Comics, Image Comics, Todd McFarlane Productions, McFarlane Toys, and currently Idea and Design Works. You can do it as well.

If you're working on a shoestring you might as well forget about the fancy four-color sales sheets, incentive toys, leather

bags and other such items. You'll pay out more for those incentives and giveaways than you have invested in your book. You have to look hard and look small. Knock out the most teeth with your punch.

You're gonna have to spend some money, but let's try and make that as little as possible without staining your product as cheap. Remember.... what you hand out, give away, or use as a sales incentive reflects on you and your product.

Something that has worked great for me for the last sixteen years has been black and white signed art prints. I take usually 200 of them to store signings and conventions, and give them away to those that come by to see me at the booth or table. Yeah, most of the time folks come by they have one of the many comic books that I've written through out the years, but believe it or not there are still a few people out there that haven't had the manly pleasure of reading one of my two fisted tales of testosterone. In those cases I always make sure that I give them one of my b&w prints. I sign it, personalize it, do everything but make 'em lunch. That way they walk away with something:

1. Free.
2. Collectable.
3. An item that promotes one of my creations, or something new I have coming out.
4. Great art by one of the many great artists that I've worked with or that owes me many favors.

It's a win/win situation for me and them...at least I like to think so. Some of the artists that have done these for me have been Mitch Byrd, Tony Daniel, Joyce Chin, Todd McFarlane, Brad Gorby, Dan Fraga, Sergio Cariello, Tom Lyle, Tim Bradstreet, Tim Truman, Ron Frenz, Flint Henry, Dwayne Turner, Scot Eaton, and many more. Here's a small breakdown of what I use and spend:

A ream of white card stock 8 1/2" x 11"inch paper. Usually 200 sheets for around \$8.00.

Artwork of my character or my current work. If it's your character or current work, then you're bound to have some art already. Always try and get your artist buddy to do it for free. It promotes you, your character and the artist. You must make sure you put the artist's name on the work so they can get publicity. Plus, they can always sign it as well. You may want to run off 200 for them for their own promotion. If you sign it as well it helps them out. Cost: \$0.00.

Copy Shop. If you don't have a copier then you have to take it to Kinko's or Office Depot and have them do it. That'll cost you around \$10.00 to \$30.00, give or take depending on where you have it done and how many you have made. You can always start your life of crime and do 'em at your job when no one is looking. You didn't hear that from me.

So your total cost at that point, tops, is around \$38.00. You take that same print and shove one in every mailing you have to do to any member of the press, distribution, and non family members.

notes...



**UNKNOWN**  
Beau Smith  
The Flying Fist Ranch  
PO Box 706, Ceredo, WV 25507

Get it seen. If you're really smart, you'll type all sorts of info on the book/character/project/yourself on the back of the print. Use every space you can. I've always offered free signed prints to fans, message board members, and anyone else that'll listen. All I ask is that they send a self addressed stamped (enough postage) envelope (big enough for the print) to me, and I will send them a signed print. That way you aren't paying out the postage. Both parties get something.

You can also do up a special print for a retailer, distributor, or subscription service to use as an incentive for when their customers buy your book from them. I've done this many times, and everyone has profited from it.

One other item that I've used over the years with great success is a memo/note pad. Everyone has to write down something or send a note...might as well have your character and info on it. Spread the word like cheap peanut butter.

These notepads are usually 4 1/4" x 7" inches. Here's what you have to have on it:

1. A small illo of your character or creation.
2. The book/character's name or title.
3. Your contact info-name, address, phone, fax, email, and site address.

That'll leave some room for them to write their notes and such. Cost for this can run between \$25.00 up to quite a bit. My suggestion is to take it to a copy place like Kinko's or Office Max. Take the art and info you want on it. Have it done in black and white. That'll save you some money as well. These have worked great for me. I've been in the Image Comics, DC Comics, Dark Horse Comics, Diamond Dist. offices among many, and have seen my note pads every where. Give them to folks that will use them and spread your good name around. You know.... kinda like you did in high school when you'd write your name and number on the girl's bathroom wall in search for a good time. Don't deny it. I know ya did.

## Parts Unknown

Beau Smith-Brad Gorby



8 1/2" x 11" black and white print. Parts Unknown artwork by Brad Gorby.

You can see some of the examples of my prints and notepads right here with my article. Just to give you an idea what they look like. Fun, cheap ways to push yourself on others without hitting them...too hard

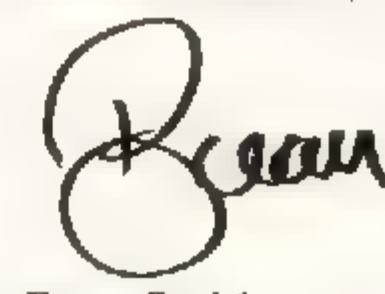
By the way, if you want one of my many signed b&w prints...just send me a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll get one out to you for free. Postage should be around 68 cents...that's two 34 cent stamps. The envelope should be 9"x 12" inches.

Here's where to send it:

Beau Smith  
The Flying Fist Ranch  
P.O. Box 706  
Ceredo, WV. 25507

I hope to hear from you soon, amigos.

From the ranch,

  
Beau Smith

MITCH BYRD'S

# How to Draw

## What Are Your Characters Saying? ...and Just How are They Saying It?

When you draw your comic pages or illustrations, the characters you draw will have to communicate ideas and actions with more than word balloons and speed lines. Their facial expressions and body positions can tell the reader many things about the character that might take pages if a description had to be written out. Mannerisms are unique to real people, so if we give characters mannerisms then the characters can become a little more real.

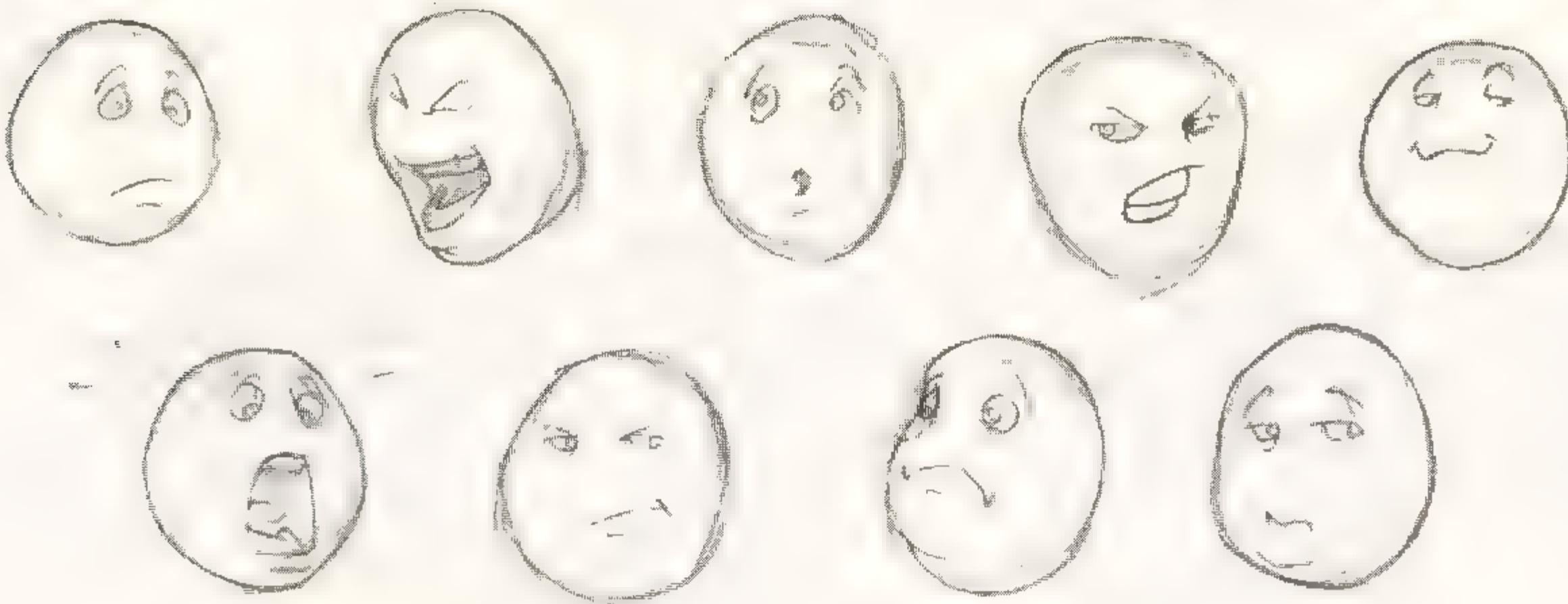


#1. Take a look at the guy with the brief case walking against a strong wind. By the way he's drawn, in just one picture some things about his character can be derived. The wind is obviously too strong to be out in but he's out in it on business, so very dedicated. He, despite the high wind, walks with his arms down along his sides in a very proper fashion, and does not use the briefcase as a shield. The character wants to walk as normally as possible so as not to draw attention to himself, so he must be a very old fashion sort. It's those unwritten or unspoken traits that you always want to add to your characters when possible.

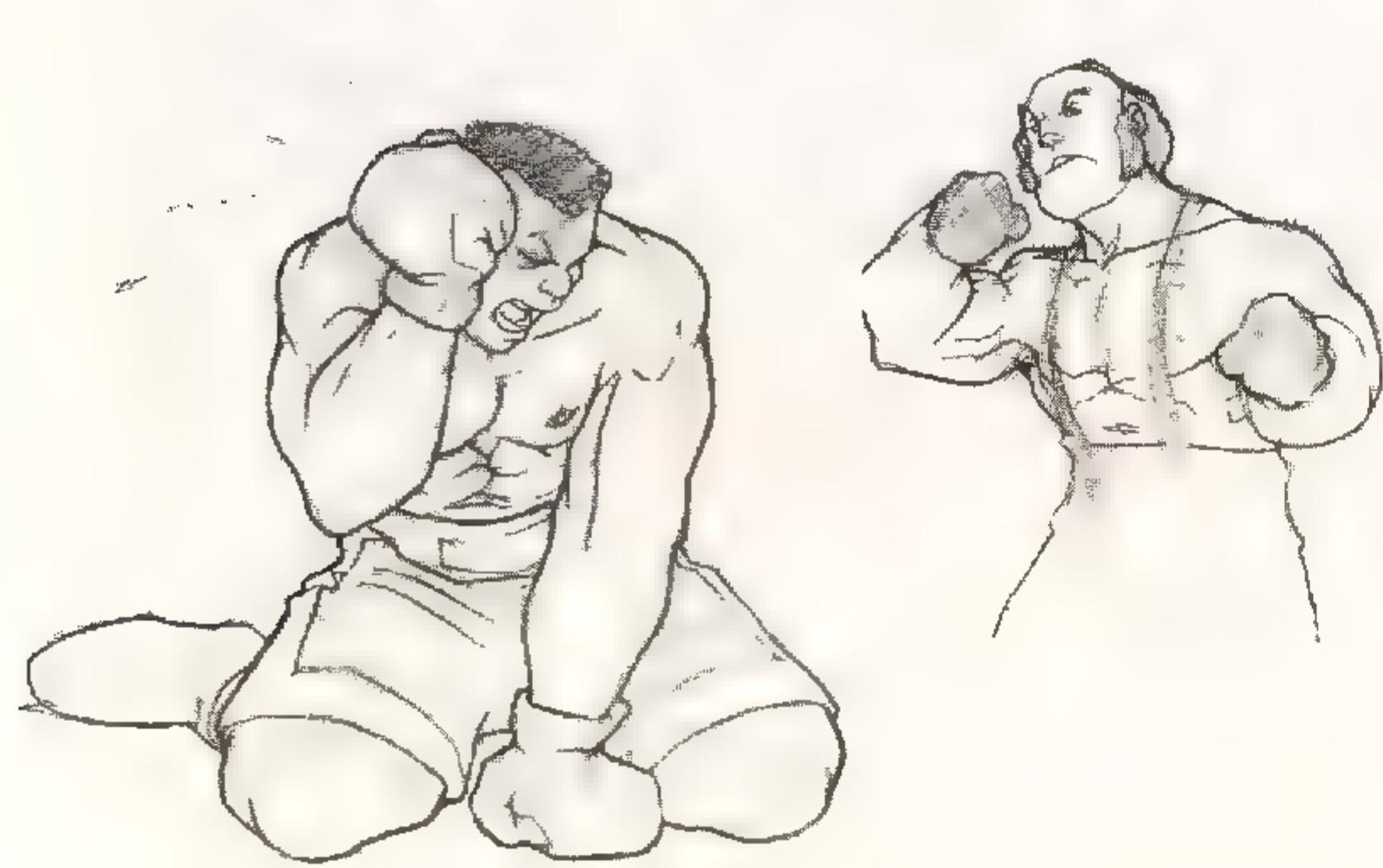


#2. Practice drawing stick figures to get a feeling for body language. Body language and facial expressions tell a lot, but since they're usually being expressed one picture at a time, a little over-acting by the characters helps add punch to the story. Look at figure A, who is raising his hand to strike something. The posture is normal, but kind of bland. Figure B gets a lot more action in the movement, and looks like he means what he says. Figure C has really reared back and is about to let someone have it. Figure C - through exaggeration - is clearly communicating the same action that seems so vague with Figure A.

#3. The same approach works just as well for drawing facial expressions. There's nothing wrong with a little vaudeville if it helps you get the character's personality across. Practice drawing various expressions on egg shapes, it will really help you to express your character's thoughts and feelings. These pictures don't move, so take every opportunity to let the little things help.

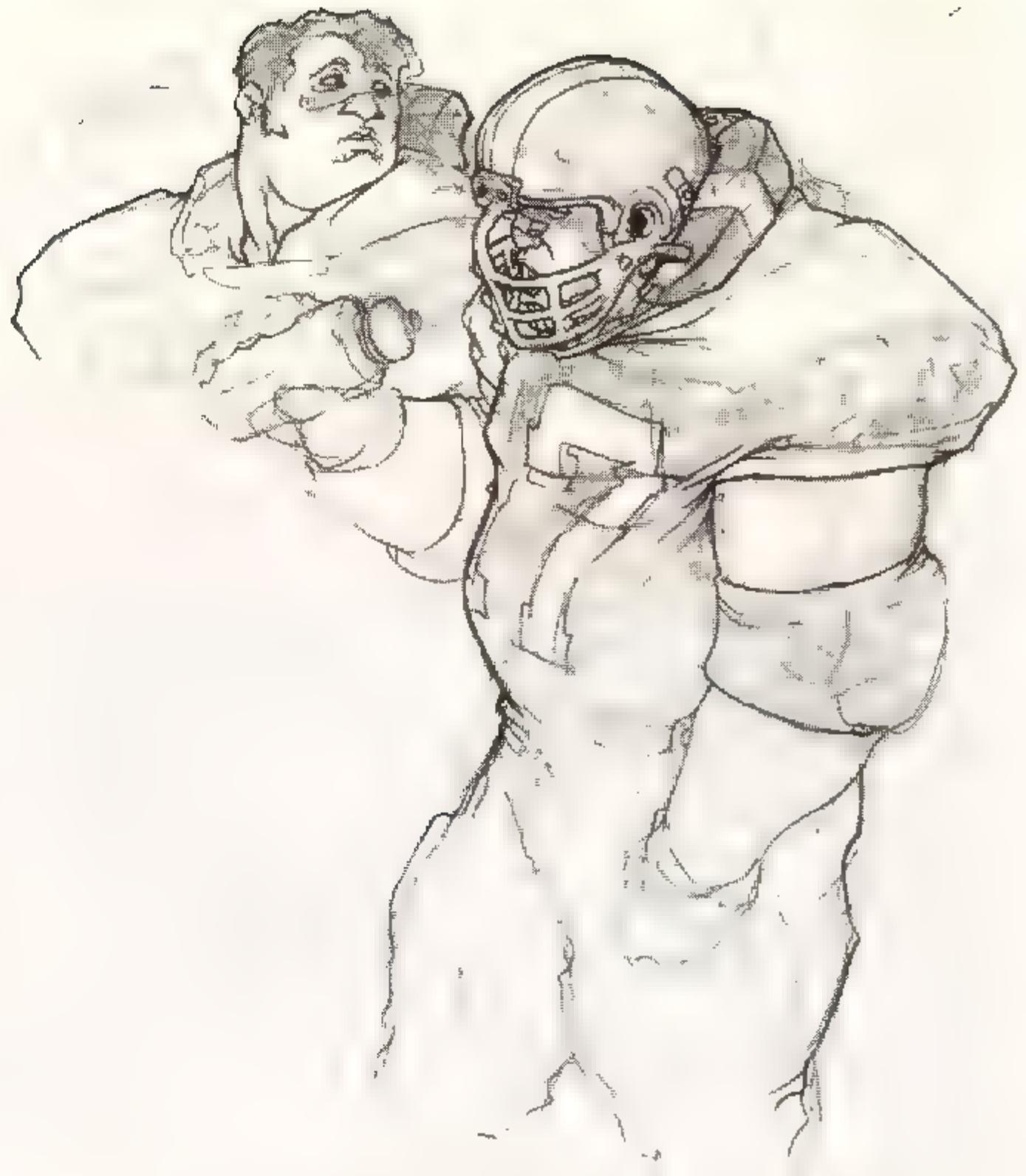


#4. Remember that all real people are different, so make all your characters different, not just in how they look physically but also in their body language. How their personalities come through; that's the acting part. People look different and act different.

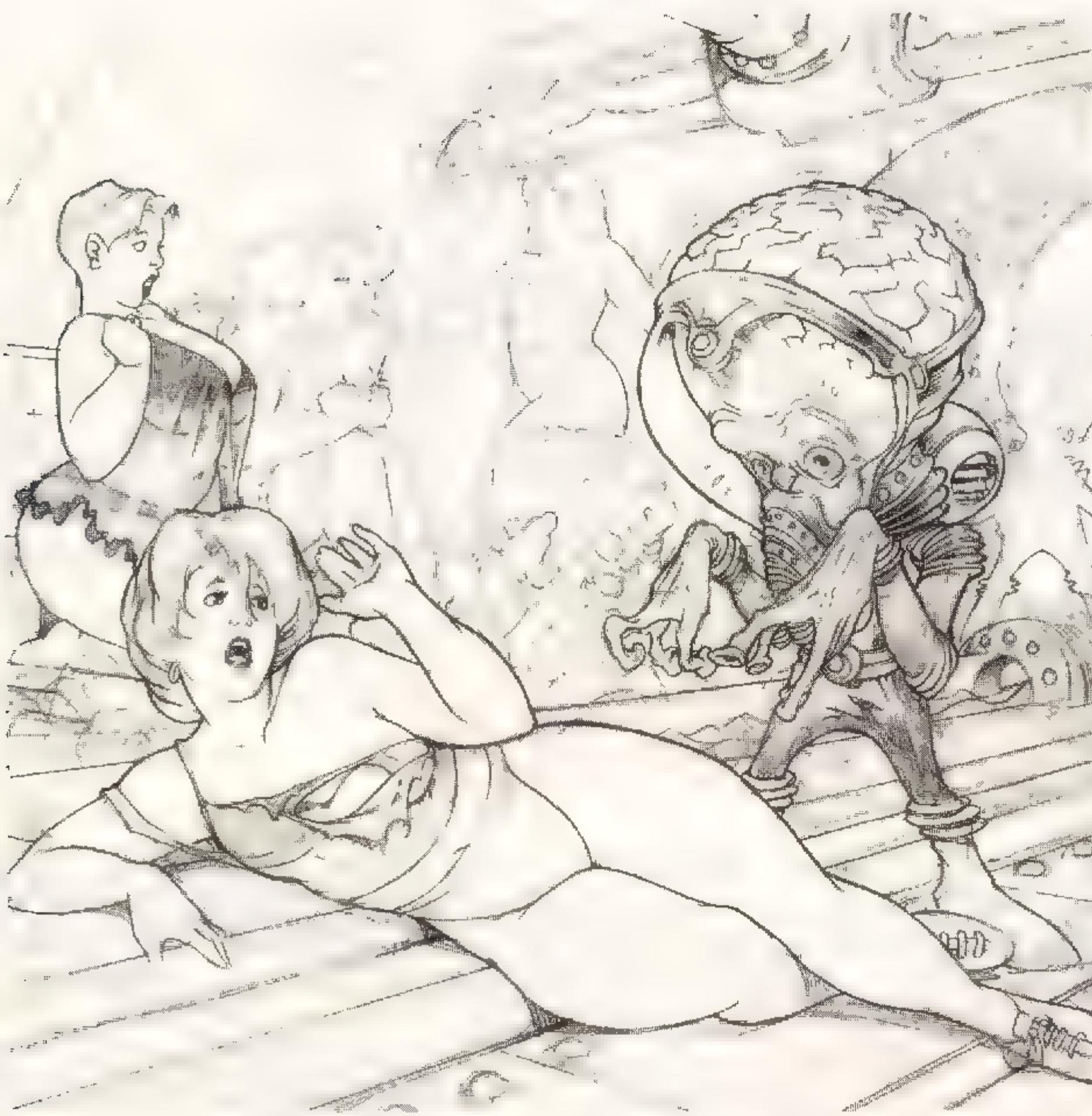




#5. And don't shy away from putting some expression into the non-humans. It might not be true to life, but that's what comic books are for.



#6. By the middle of the game, football players are probably tired. So the shoulders get a little stooped and the expressions a little weary.



MARS NEEDS QUIET WOMEN!

#7. The idea of this sketch is a take off on the old 50's movie - but the Martians didn't bargain on the vocal talents of the Hollywood starlets, and are just as horrified as the girls! If the Martians are having the same experience as the girls, I thought they should act like the girls; hands raised and screeching.



#8. Keep practicing expressing your characters through their body movement and facial expression, and you'll find yourself becoming comfortable in taking some of the initiative in their development. Often the writer is counting on your input, and will certainly welcome your ability in character portrayal.

# BlueLine PRO

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### STORYBOARD TEMPLATES

Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation.

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling

- ITEM# BL1018 SRP \$13.95

100 sheets of 60 lb. 8 1/2" x 14" pages with 3 panels padded with colored cover.



### COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS

Blue Line Pro COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS offer comic strip illustrators an easy and time saving way to create professional looking comic strips. Printed on Blue Line Pro's Premiere (Strathmore) 300 series smooth with a non-photo blue border. Daily comic strip borders measure 4 1/16" x 13". This offers the illustrator the ability to reduce the original at a 44% reduction to the standard daily strip size. Sunday comic strip borders have two sizes, the first is a large format of 5 3/8" x 11 1/2" and the second format of 3 3/4" x 11 1/2". The Sunday strips are drawn at the size they are published and usual have two rows of panels. Each strip offers basic border formats for four and three panels and Sundays allow for additional rows.

BLP COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS 12 Daily Comic Strips and 2 Sunday Comic Strips.

- ITEM # BL1052 SRP #12.95



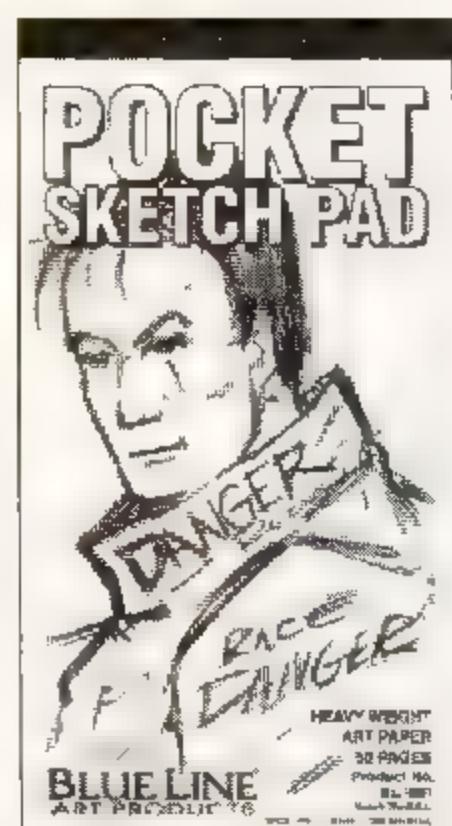
### POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when you hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper.

Great for pencilning, inking and washes.

50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover

- Item # BL1051 SRP \$5.95



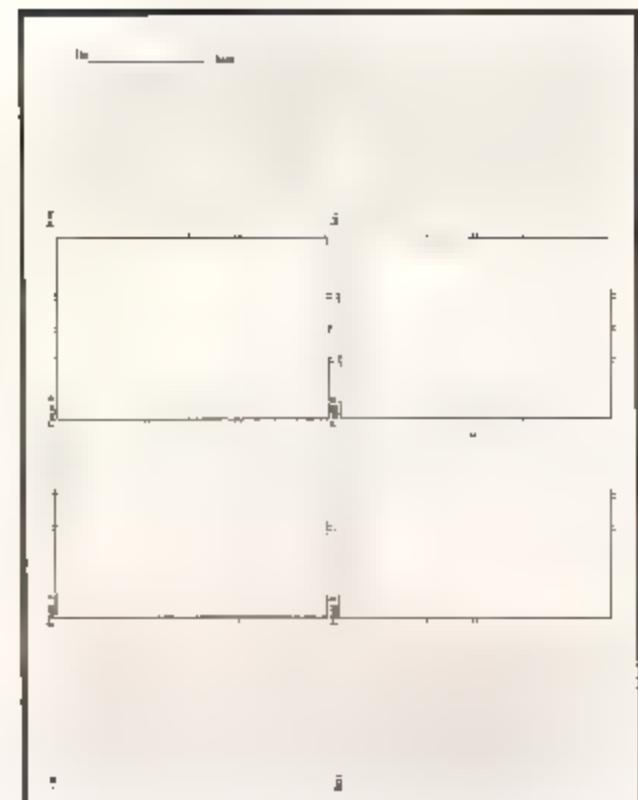
### LAYOUT PAGES

Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

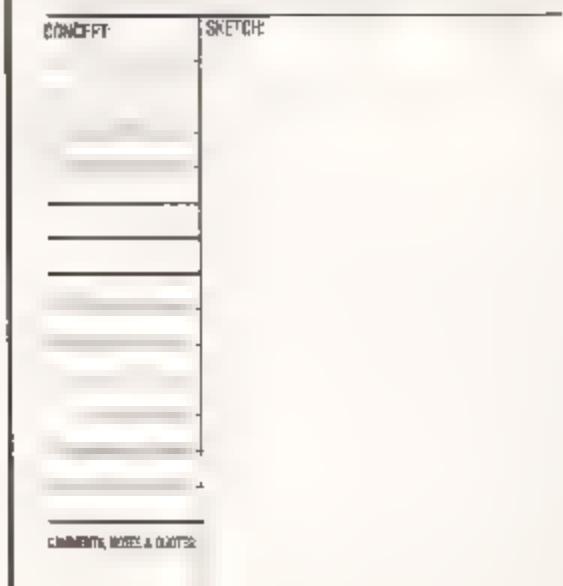
Used for story boarding your comic book story. A great tool for artists or writers to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages.

- ITEM# BL1005 SRP \$8.95

30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.



### CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES



### CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative ideas on a convenient, quality art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bio, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing.

These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

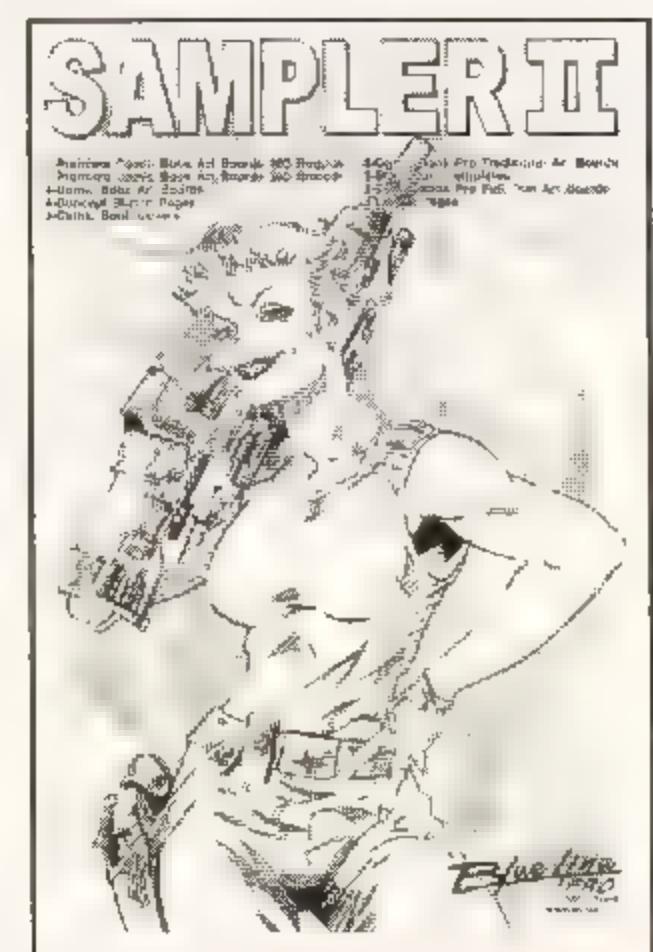
- ITEM# BL1004 SRP \$8.95

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged

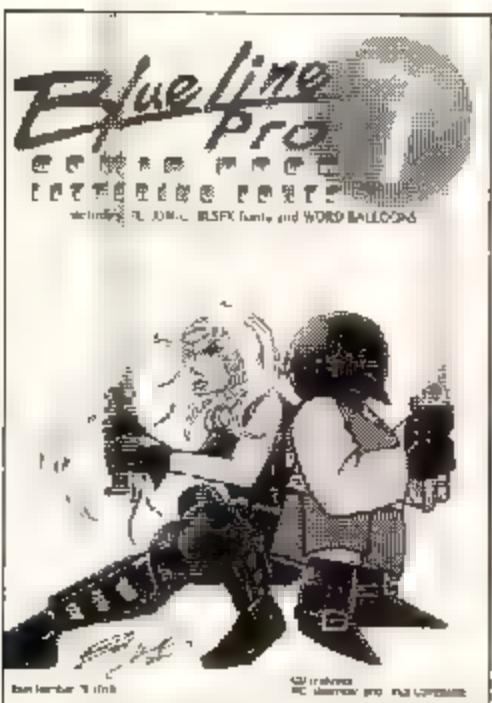
### BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!

- ITEM# BL1040 SRP \$13.95



25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.



## BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT

### SERIES 1

#### BLCOMIC FONT

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1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1234567890

Blue Line now offers creators an inexpensive lettering font.

**BLCOMIC** font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. **BLSFX** is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

Also included is user configurable word balloons in .eps format

**Blue Line Pro's Comic Book Font Vol. 1**

- ITEM# BL1019 - SRP \$19.95

### SERIES 2

#### DIGITALCARTOON-Regular

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0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### DIGITALCARTOON-Italic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
01P3456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### D DIGITALCARTOON-Italic Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
01P3456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### D DIGITALCARTOON-Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### D DIGITALCARTOON-Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### SACREDBLUE-Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### SACREDBLUE-Italic

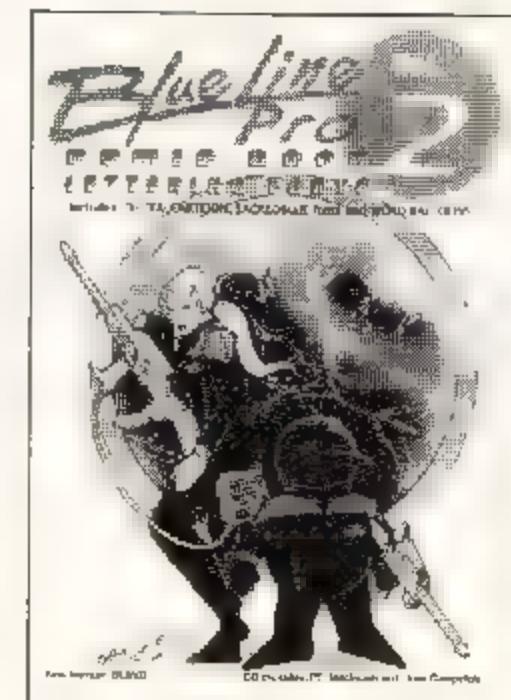
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### SACREDBLUE-Italic Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--

#### SACREDBLUE-Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ  
0123456789!?. , . ( ) / \$ +--



Blue Line Pro's Vol. 2 of inexpensive lettering font.

**BLDIGITALCARTOON** and **BLSACREDBLUE** fonts are formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. Also included is user configurable word balloons in .eps format.

**Blue Line Pro Comic Book Fonts Vol.2**

- ITEM# BL2002 - SRP \$19.95

### SKETCH BOOK SERIES

Blue Line offers two different sizes of Sketch Books. A Regular 8 1/2" x 11" size and the Traditional 11" x 17" size both are filled with 200 pages of 70 lb. art paper. Both have hard covers with library quality stitch binding for durability and makes it easier to draw without an art table.

#### SKETCH BOOK REGULAR (8 1/2" x 11")

This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunity to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends. Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!

- Item #BL1010 / 200 pg. Hard cover book. SRP \$24.95

#### SKETCH BOOK TRADITIONAL (11" x 17")

This Sketch Book offers the artist the ability to draw the size they're going to draw their original comic book pages.

- Item #BL1011 / 200 pg. Hard cover book. SRP \$27.95

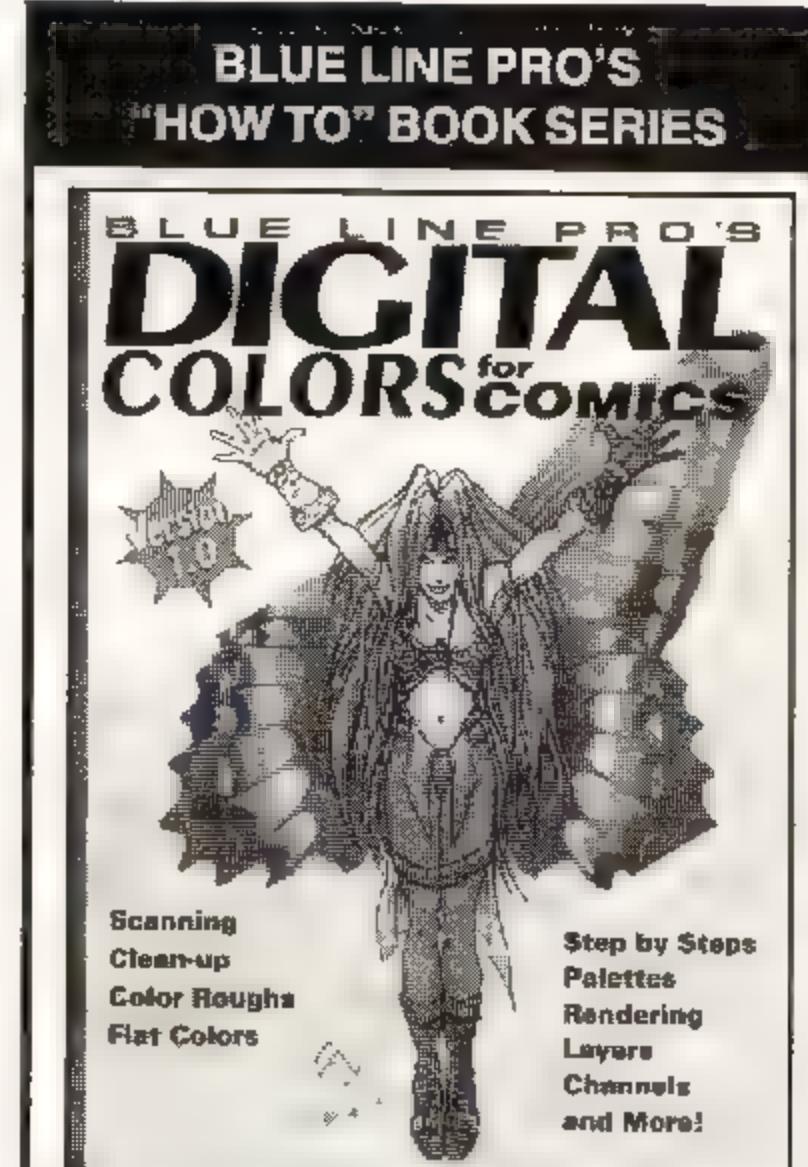
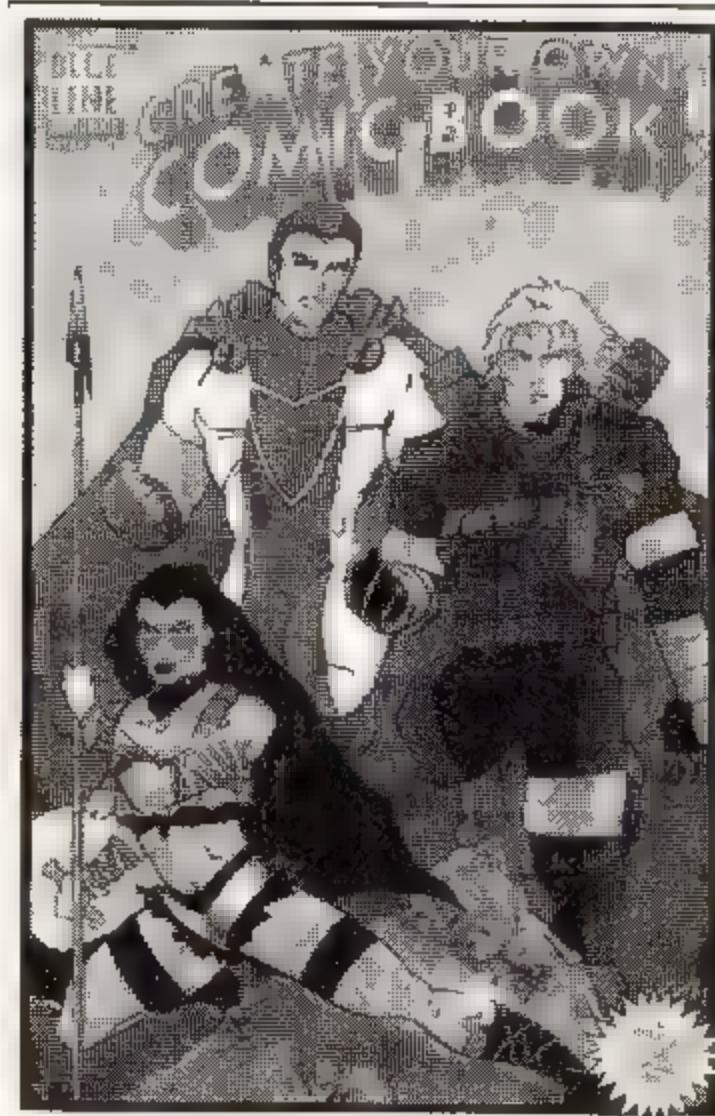


### CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book

- ITEM# BL1002 SRP \$21.95

Box Set 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.



### BLUE LINE PRO'S DIGITAL COLORS FOR COMICS

By Aaron Hübrich

Blue Line Pro presents the first in a series of Blue Line Pro "how to" manual books with everything you would ever need to know about digital coloring, and then some. With 48 square-bound full color pages, digital colorist and Sketch columnist Aaron Hübrich walks us through the process of digitally coloring from start to finish, providing extensive commentaries and broken down step by steps. In addition, Aaron shows that there's more than one way to color a cat by demonstrating alternative pathways for the same effects.

Full Color 8x10 48pg

SRP \$9.95

ITEM# BL3001

### BLUE LINE PRO'S DIGITAL COLORS FOR COMICS CD-ROM EDITION

This special edition includes several extra features on one easy to use CD includes ready-to-color high resolution line art that corresponds with the lessons taught in the book, exclusive links to the internet for additional information and updates, and much, much more. CD comes sealed on inside back cover. Compatible with PC and Mac. Full Color 8x10 48pg with CD SRP \$15.95 ITEM# BL3001CD

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A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes. Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof.  
-AR-4415 Black Ink (Higgins) 1oz. \$3.00  
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One of the finest drawing ink available. Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and fine art papers or tracing cloth.  
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-A-R-FW-011 FW White Acrylic Artist Ink \$ 5.00

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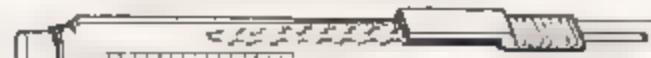
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- Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India Ink density Black permanent drawing ink.  
-AR-4013-EEF 0.3mm \$1.55  
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- **Penstix Set**  
Includes all 3 Penstix Sizes  
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Offers maximum India drawing ink like density Black waterproof permanent ink  
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-AR-TL04 0.4mm \$1.95  
-AR-TL05 0.5mm \$1.95
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-AR-TLP5 set of 5 (all sizes above) \$9.50  
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- Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points  
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-AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (.5mm) \$22.00  
-AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (6mm) \$22.00  
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- Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel  
• **Mechanical Pencil 2mm.**  
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-AR-BP2375-2H \$10.50  
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- Provides professional point for standard leads  
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Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs.  
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**Sakura Pigma Micron**

- Available in six point sizes. Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry  
-AR-XSK005-49 20mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-XSK01-49 25mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-XSK02-49 30mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-XSK03-49 35mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-XSK05-49 45mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-XSK08-49 50mm, black \$2.95  
-AR-30061 3-pk., .25, .35, .45mm \$8.00  
-AR-30062 All sizes, black \$16.00

**Sandpaper Pointer**

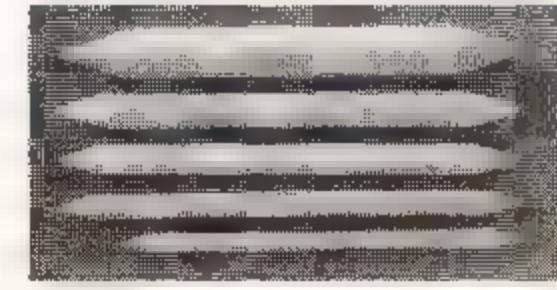
Ideal for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal, and crayons by hand

- AR-3435-1 Sandpaper Pointer \$9.95

**Magic-Rub Eraser**

Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark or smudge

- AR-1954FC-1 Magic-Rub Eraser \$9.95

**Blending Stumps**

Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels etc. Use sandpaper to repoint.

- AR-T811-1 1 1/4" x 5 1/4" \$.50  
-AR-T812-1 5/16" x 6" \$.75  
-AR-T813-1 13/32" x 6" \$1.00  
-AR-T814-1 15/32" x 6" \$1.25  
-AR-T817-1 5/8" x 6" \$1.50

**WORKABLE FIXATIF (Krylon)**

Provides lasting protection.

Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling

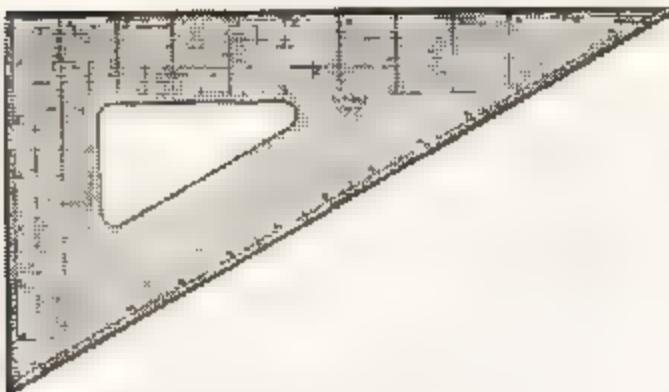
Workable Fixatif

- AR-KR1306 \$8.95



**T-SQUARES**

- Plastic T-squares offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements
  - AR-HX02 Plastic 12" \$3.95
  - AR-NBA18 Plastic 18" \$7.95
  - AR-NBA24 Plastic 24" \$10.95
- Aluminum T-squares offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head
  - AR-FR63-112 Aluminum 12" \$10.95
  - AR-FR63-118 Aluminum 18" \$12.95
  - AR-FR63-124 Aluminum 24" \$13.95

**TRIANGLES**

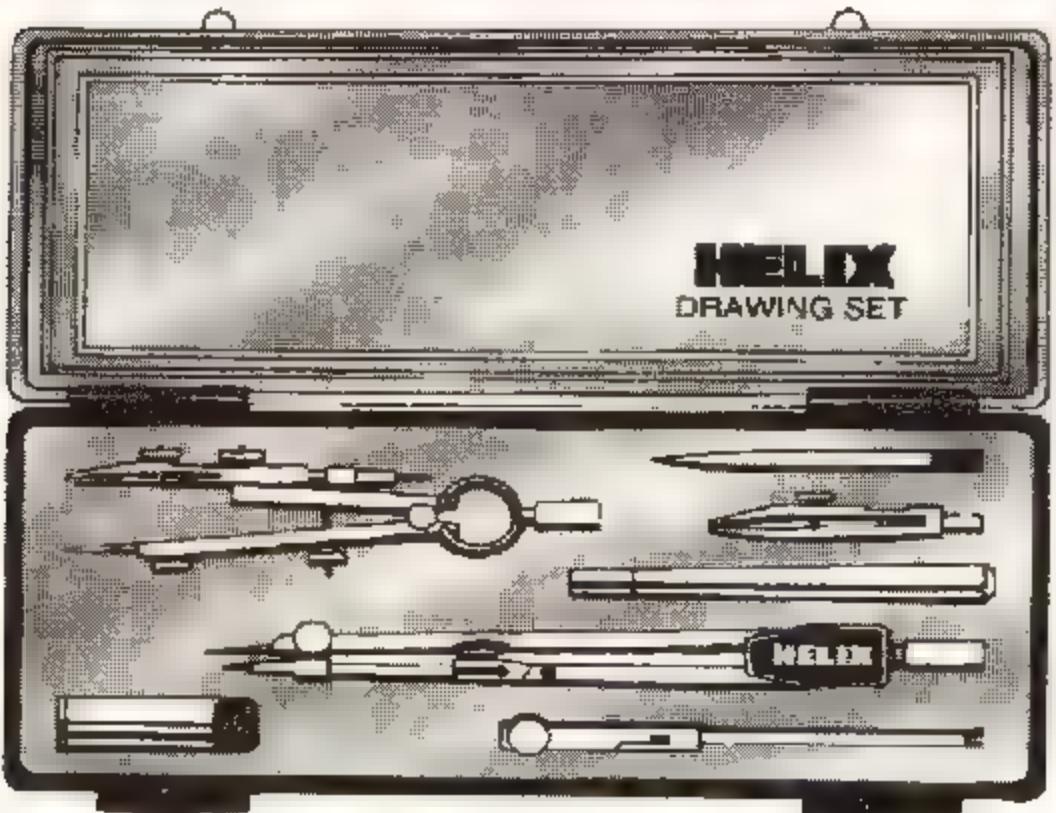
High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for inkers.

- 30" x 60" W/ Inking Edge
  - AR-1204-60 Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch \$3.50
  - AR-1206-60 Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch \$4.50
  - AR-1208-60 Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch \$5.50
  - AR-1210-60 Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch \$6.50
  - AR-1212-60 Triangle 30"x60" 12 inch \$8.50
  - AR-1214-60 Triangle 30"x60" 14 inch \$10.50
- 45" X 90" W/ Inking Edge
  - AR-1204-45 Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch \$4.50
  - AR-1206-45 Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch \$5.50
  - AR-1208-45 Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch \$7.50
  - AR-1210-45 Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch \$9.50
  - AR-1212-45 Triangle 45"x90" 12 inch \$13.50

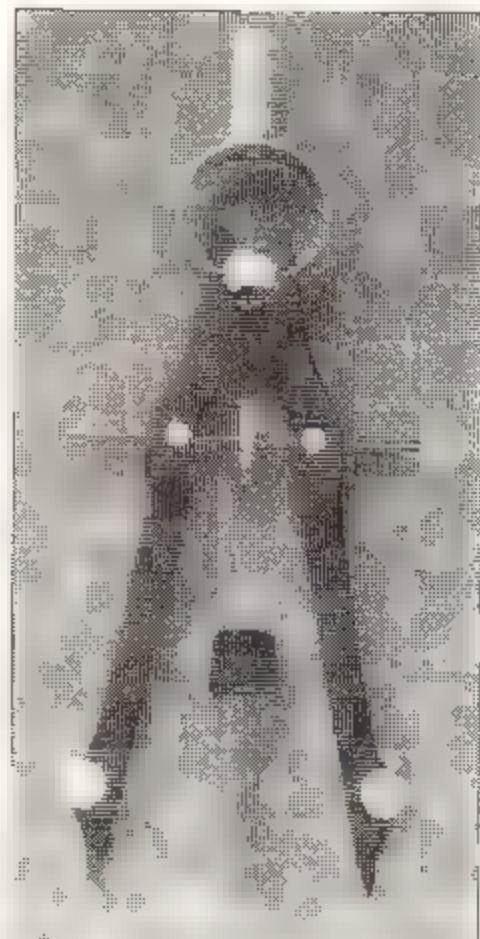
**COMPASS SET**

Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener

- 8-piece Geometry Set
  - AR-HX18807 \$4.95
- 8-Piece Geometry Set (brass compass)
  - AR-723405 \$7.95
- Basic Geometry Set
  - 4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12' protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)
    - AR-FL03 \$5.95



- Basic Combination Compass
  - 6-piece compass set. side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer
    - AR-S61 Set \$15.95
- Compass Set
  - 6-piece drawing set contains Small side screw compass, 5 1/2" self-centering knee joint compass/divider, extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer
    - ARHLX01330-01330 Set \$16.95



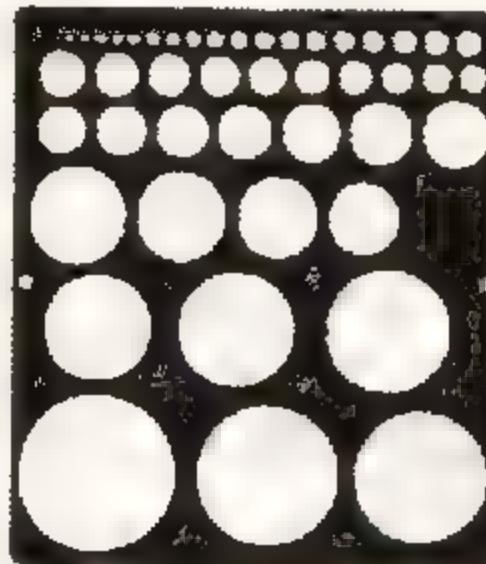
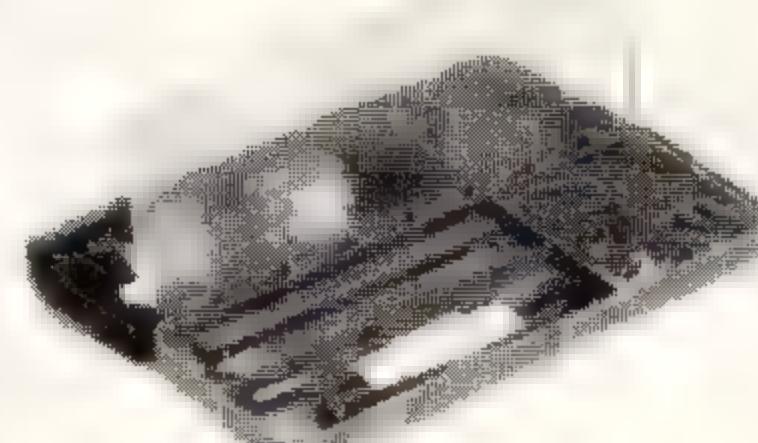
- 5" Bow Compass & Divider
  - An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider
    - AR-494 5" Bow Compass \$4.95



- 14 Piece Drafting Kit
  - Drafting Kit includes 12' architectural scale 12x16 vinyl pouch, lettering guide pad, 6" compass, 6" divider, 10" 30/60 triangle, 8" 45/90 triangle, 6" protractor, 6 1/2" french curve, soft pencil eraser, lead holder, mini lead pointer, erasing shield and a three pack of 2.0mm lead.
    - AR-BDK-1A 15 Piece Drafting Kit \$38.95

**RULERS**

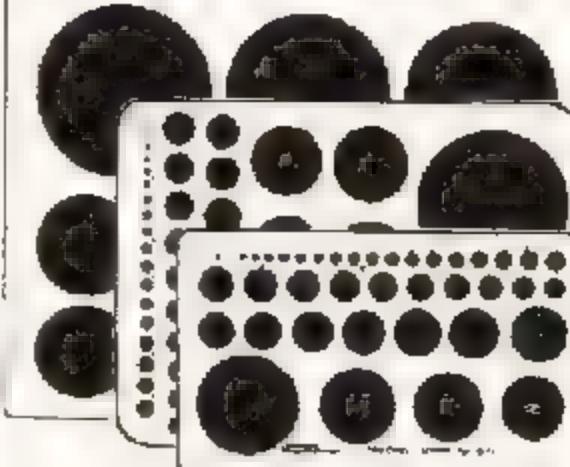
- Stainless Steel Rulers offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing
  - AR-200-12 Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing \$5.95
  - AR-200-18 Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing \$8.95
  - Plastic Ruler 1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings
    - AR-C36 Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) \$1.25
    - AR-18 Ruler 6" (plastic ruler) \$1.50

**CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES / ELLIPSE TEMPLATES**

- Circle Templates
  - Metric and standard Risers for smear-free drawing (Great for Inkers)
  - Large Circles
    - AR-13001 \$7.95
  - Extra Large Circles
    - AR-13011 \$6.95



- French Curves (Inking Edge)
  - AR-9000 Set \$6.95
  - Ellipse Temps.
    - AR-PK12691 \$12.00

**Circle Templates Set of 3**

This set of 3 templates provides ninety-eight different circles and edge scales in 50th, 16th and 10th as well as mm and centering lines. Sizes ranging from 1/32 inches to 3 1/2 inches.

- ITEM #AR-TD404 SRP \$17.95

**Ellipse Tempate**

- AR-PK12691 \$12.00

**POCKET PORTFOLIO**

- AR-FL419WH Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20 \$10.50

**STORAGE BOXES**

- Sketch Pac 2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 1/4" x 1 3/4"
  - AR-6880AB \$12.95



- One Tray Art Bins 13" x 7 1/4" x 5 3/4", Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch
  - AR-6843AC black \$15.25



- DRAFTSMAN BRUSH
  - Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging.
  - Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)
    - AR-FT5391 \$6.00



- XACTO KNIFE
  - Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap.
  - Xacto Knife
    - AR-XA3626 \$5.25
    - Xacto Refill Blades #1
      - AR-OLKB \$6.50

**RUBBER CEMENT**

Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses

- Rubber Cement 4oz.
  - AR-BT138 \$3.50
- Rubber Cement Quart
  - AR-BT102 \$13.25
- Rubber Cement Thinner Pint
  - AR-BT201 \$8.50
- Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)
  - AR-BT700 \$1.50

**COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES**

- Protect your original Art Work
  - Comic Book Original Art Sleeves
    - 11 1/2" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil.)
      - AR-BAG 1119-25 25 Bags \$7.50
      - AR-BAG 1119-100 100 Bag \$25.00



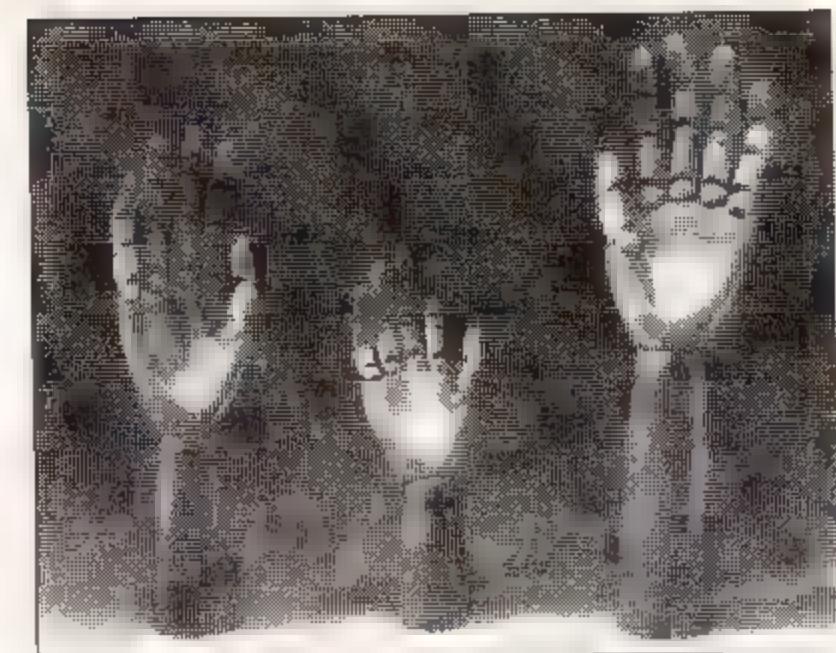
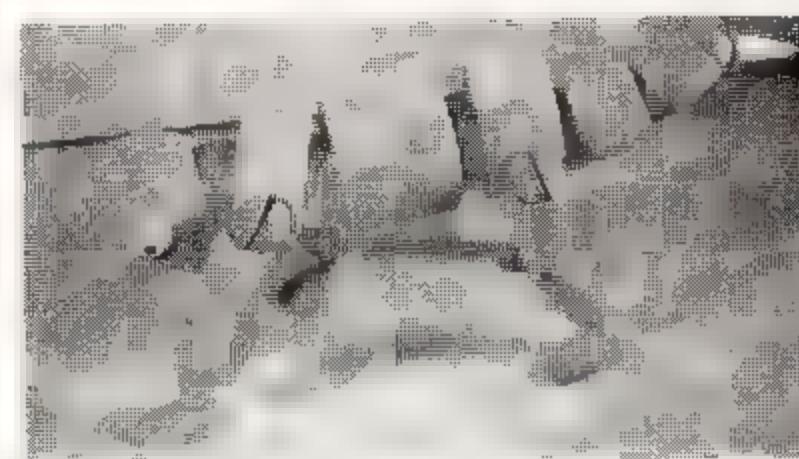
• **12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin**

Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for modeling proportions involving angles. Made from carved hardwood, 12" in height.  
-AR-CW201 12" Model  
SRP \$19.95



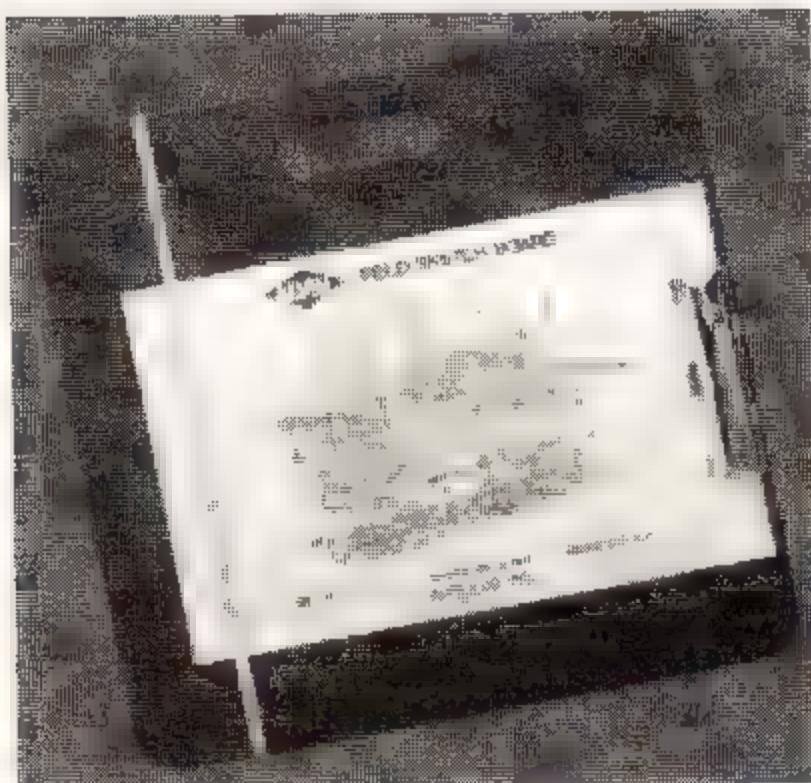
• **12" Horse Wooden Mannequin**

-AR033090410 SRP \$99.00  
• **12" Lizard Wooden Mannequin**  
-AR056090440 SRP \$17.95



• **Hand Mannequins**

Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully articulated. Comes in three sizes: male, female and child.  
-AR-HM3 14" Male Hand SRP \$49.95  
-AR-HM4 12" Female Hand SRP \$46.95  
-AR-HM5 9" Child Hand SRP \$42.95



• **LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS**

Made of strong tempered masonite with cutout carry handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold paper securely in place.  
-AR-SB1819 18 1/2" X 19 1/2" SRP \$9.95  
-AR-SB2326 23 1/2" X 26" SRP \$12.95



• **PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)**

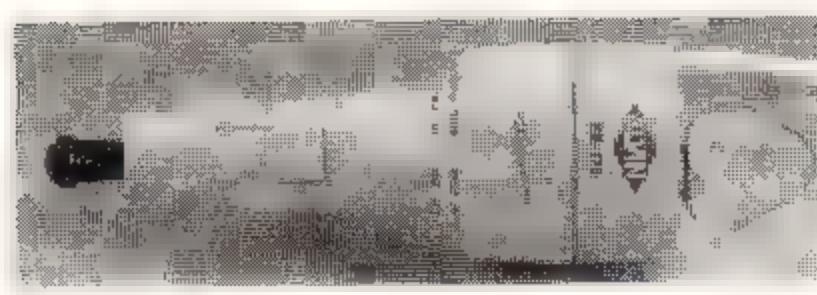
Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1" black superior quality rings (Does not snag pages). Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX)

-AR-S1-2171 17" x 14" SRP \$88.95  
-AR-S1-2241 24" x 18" SRP \$110.50  
Refill Pages for Presentation Case  
-AR-ZX17 17" x 14" 10 pack SRP \$23.95  
-AR-ZX24 24" x 18" 10 pack SRP \$45.95



• **DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS ARTFOLIOS**

24 pages of acid, pvc, and lignen safe art sleeves  
Archival Safe  
-AR-IA1212 Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 shts SRP \$15.95  
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)  
-AR-IA1214 Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 shts SRP \$25.95  
(Holds most oversized art boards)  
-AR-IA128 Artfolio book 8 1/2 x 11 w/ 24 shts SRP \$7.50



• **ALVIN ELECTRIC ERASER**

Durable high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers. Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation even under heaviest workloads.  
-AR-EE1754 With s/p chuck SRP \$85.00

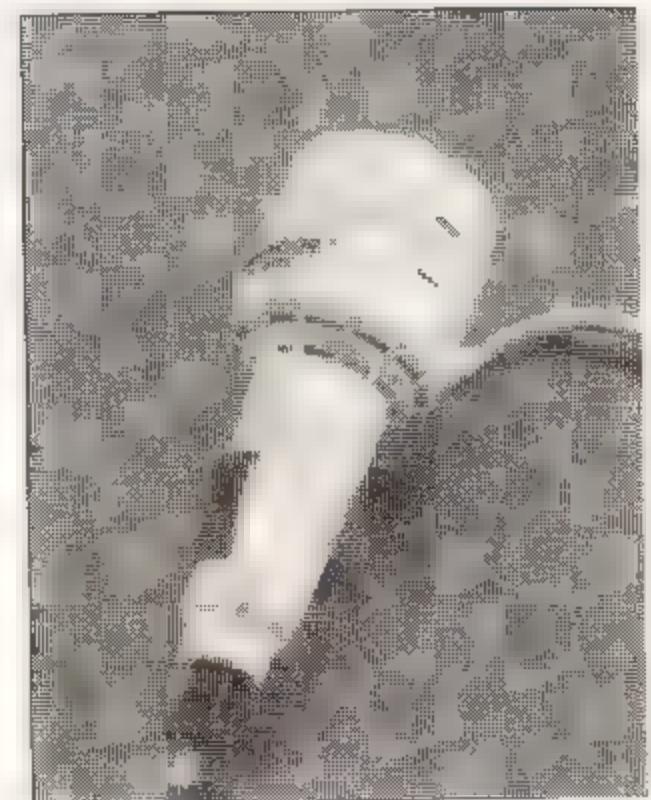
**ELECTRIC ERASER and REFILLS**

• **KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER**

• **ALL PURPOSE ELECTRIC SYSTEM**

Designed to erase both lead and ink from paper and film. Features a heavy-duty, maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl strip eraser for paper or the specially formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip eraser.

-AR-2800E All purpose Electric System SRP \$73.95



• **CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER**

Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile, two-way operation—cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant LEXAN case. Lightweight, portable recharging stand power pack, plus a No. 287 vinyl strip eraser.

-AR-2850C Cordless, Rechargeable SRP \$96.95

• **KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS**

-AR-ER285 Yellow, Imbibed, ink, 10/box SRP \$6.95  
-AR-ER287 Soft Vinyl, pencil, 10/box SRP \$5.95



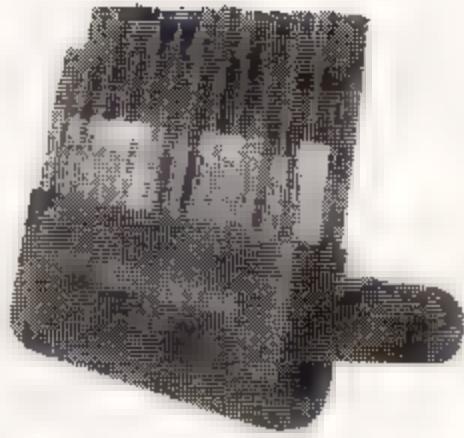
• **ERASER REFILLS**

-AR-ER72 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz SRP \$6.95  
-AR-ER73 7" white, pencil, 1 doz SRP \$6.95  
-AR-ER74 7" pink, pencil, 1 doz SRP \$6.95  
-AR-ER88 7" white vinyl, ink/pencil, 1 doz SRP \$6.95

## PRISMACOLOR MARKERS AND SETS

All Colors are available!

- All Singles \$3.30
- Metallic: single nib
- AR-PM117 (Broad) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM118 (Fine) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM119 (Broad) Metallic Gold
- AR-PM120 (Fine) Metallic Gold
- All Metallic Singles \$3.30
- PRISMACOLOR SETS**
- Primary/Secondary 12-Set  
Includes AR-PM 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61 and 9.  
- AR-BP12N \$40.00
- Cool Grey 12-set  
- AR-BP12P \$40.00
- Warm Grey 12-set  
- AR-BP12Q \$40.00
- French Grey 12-set  
- AR-BP12R \$40.00
- Prismacolor 24 set  
- AR-BP24S \$79.25
- Prismacolor 48 set  
- AR-BP48S \$158.50
- Prismacolor 72 set  
- AR-BP72S \$288.00
- Prismacolor 120 set  
- AR-BP120S \$394.00
- Prismacolor 144 set  
- AR-BP144S \$470.00
- Empty Studio Marker Stacker  
- AR-STUDIO \$18.00
- Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case  
- AR-BP24C \$90.00
- Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case  
- AR-BP48C \$170.00
- All Colors are available!**
- AR-PM1 Process Red
- AR-PM4 Crimson Red
- AR-PM5 Scarlet Lake
- AR-PM6 Carmine Red
- AR-PM7 Magenta
- AR-PM8 Pink
- AR-PM10 Blush Pink
- AR-PM11 Deco Pink
- AR-PM12 Light Pink
- AR-PM13 Poppy Red
- AR-PM14 Pale Vermilion
- AR-PM15 Yellowed Orange
- AR-PM16 Orange
- AR-PM17 Sunburst Yellow
- AR-PM18 Yellow Ochre
- AR-PM19 Canary Yellow
- AR-PM21 Tulip Yellow
- AR-PM23 Cream
- AR-PM24 Yellow Chartreuse
- AR-PM25 Spring Green
- AR-PM26 Lt Olive Green
- AR-PM27 Chartreuse
- AR-PM28 Olive Green
- AR-PM31 Dark Green
- AR-PM32 Parrot Green
- AR-PM33 Hunter Green
- AR-PM36 Lime Green
- AR-PM37 Aquemanne
- AR-PM38 Teal Blue
- AR-PM39 True Blue
- AR-PM40 Copenhagen Blue
- AR-PM42 Violet Blue
- AR-PM43 Indigo Blue
- AR-PM44 Ultramarine
- AR-PM45 Navy Blue
- AR-PM46 Light Aqua
- AR-PM47 Non-photo Blue
- AR-PM48 Lt Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM50 Violet
- AR-PM51 Black Grape
- AR-PM53 Mulberry
- AR-PM55 Rhodamine
- AR-PM59 Lavender
- AR-PM60 Violet Mist
- AR-PM61 Dark Umber
- AR-PM62 Sepia
- AR-PM65 Sienna Brown
- AR-PM69 Goldenrod
- AR-PM70 Sand
- AR-PM71 Buff
- AR-PM72 Eggshell
- AR-PM73 Flagstone Red



### • Prismacolor Singles

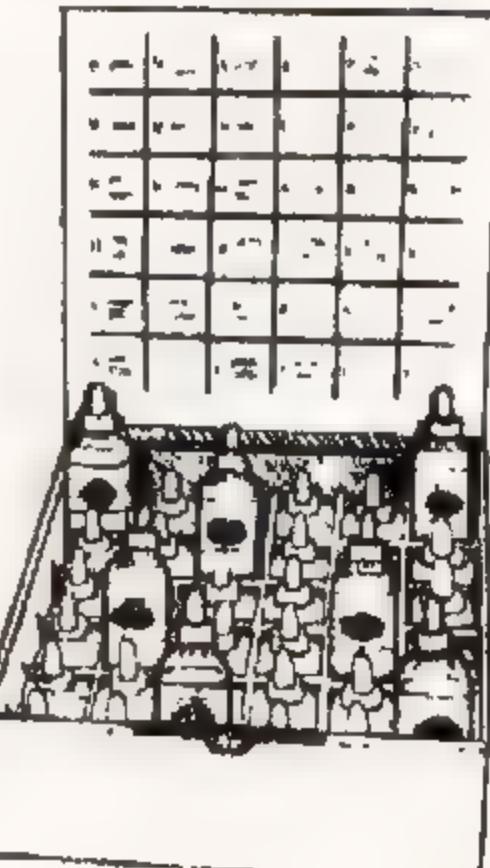
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes.



### • Prismacolor Art Pencil Sets

Professional Art Pencil Sets Soft lead, permanent pigments, blendable. Water and smear resistant. No eraser

• 12 Color Pencil Set	\$13.95
- ARSAN03596	
• 24 Color Pencil Set	\$26.95
- ARSAN03597	
• 48 Color Pencil Set	\$51.95
- ARSAN03598	
• 72 Color Pencil Set	\$76.95
- ARSAN03599	
• 96 Color Pencil Set	\$101.95
- ARSAN03601	
• 120 Color Pencil Set	\$127.95
- ARSAN03602	



You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.

## Dr. Martin Watercolors

• Radiant Concentrated Watercolors Dr. Martin's Extreme concentrated watercolors. Giving great brilliance and radiant tones in illustrations. They may be diluted with water and blend freely. Radiant colors are less transparent than synchronistic colors. In 5 oz dropper top bottles SRP \$3.95 each



• #ARDRD "D" set includes Coffee Brown, Fuchsia, Ice Blue, Ice Green, Indian Yellow, Irish Blue, Peacock Blue, Raspberry Sunrise, Pink Sunset Orange, Sunset Red, Sunshine Yellow, Tahiti Red, Tiger Yellow SRP \$55.20

• Synchronistic Transparent Watercolors Dr. Martin Synchronistic colors are easy to handle and give ultimate transparency. They may be diluted with water. 5 oz. Dropper top bottles.

SRP \$3.95	
ARDR15	Beige
ARDR33	Black
ARDR38	Brown
ARDR8	Burnt Sienna
ARDR2	Cadmium
ARDR32	Cadmium Orange
ARDR26	Carmine
ARDR28	Cerise
ARDR3	Chrom um Yellow
ARDR39	Cobalt Blue
ARDR13	Dark Gray
ARDR21	Emerald
ARDR22	Hooker's Green
ARDR24	Lake
ARDR1	Lemon Yellow
ARDR6	Light Brown
ARDR11	Light Gray
ARDR27	Magenta
ARDR12	Medium Gray
ARDR20	Nile Green
ARDR34	Olive Green
ARDR5	Orange
ARDR19	Payne's Gray
ARDR17	Prussian Blue
ARDR30	Purple
ARDR7	Red Brown
ARDR37	Rose Carmine
ARDR36	Scarlet
ARDR10	Sepia
ARDR31	Stone Gray
ARDR16	Turquoise Blue
ARDR18	Ultramarine
ARDR9	Van Dyke Brown
ARDR25	Vermilion
ARDR29	Violet
ARDR23	Viridian
ARDR4	Yellow Ochre

• Synchronistic Transparent Art Set

• #ARDRCS Thirty-six 5 oz bottles. includes Beige Black, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium, Cadmium Orange, Carmine, Cerise, Chromium Yellow, Cobalt Blue, Dark Gray, Emerald, Hooker's Green, Lake, Lemon Yellow, Light Brown, Light Gray, Magenta, Medium Gray, Nile Green, Olive Green, Orange, Payne's Gray, Prussian Blue, Purple, Red Brown, Rose Carmine, Scarlet, Sepia, Turquoise Blue, Ultramarine, Van Dyke Brown, Vermilion, Violet, Viridian, Yellow Ochre SRP \$113.50

Synchronistic Transparent Art Small Set

• #ARDRA "A" set includes

Alpine Rose

Black

Cherry Red

Grass Green

Juniper Green

Lemon Yellow

Moss Rose

Orange

Persimmon

Saddie Brown

Scarlet

Sepia

Slate Blue

Sunrise Orange

Sunset Red

Sunshine Yellow

Tahiti Red

Tangerine

Ultra Blue

Violet

Wild Rose

• #ARDRB "B" set includes

Amber

Apple Green

Crimson

Cyclamen

Daffodil

Golden

Mahogany

Moss Green

Olive Green

Sepia

Slate Blue

Tapestry

Tobacco Brown

Tropic Gold

Tropic Pink

True Blue

Turquoise Blue

Ultra Blue

Wild Rose

• #ARDRC "C" set includes

Antelope Brown

Burnt Orange

Calypso Green

Chartreuse

Hyacinth Blue

Ice Pink

Ice Yellow

Jungle Green

Norway Blue

Pumpkin

Tapestry

Tobacco Brown

Tropic Gold

Tropic Pink

True Blue

Wild Rose

SRP \$55.20 per set.

• #ARDRA "A" set includes

Alpine Rose

Black

Cherry Red

Grass Green

Juniper Green

Lemon Yellow

Moss Rose

Orange

Persimmon

Saddie Brown

Scarlet

Sepia

Slate Blue

Sunrise Orange

Sunset Red

Sunshine Yellow

Tahiti Red

Tangerine

Ultra Blue

Wild Rose

SRP \$55.20 per set.

• #ARDRA "B" set includes

Amber

Apple Green

Crimson

Cyclamen

Daffodil

Golden

Mahogany

Moss Green

Olive Green

Sepia

Slate Blue

Tapestry

Tobacco Brown

Tropic Gold

Tropic Pink

True Blue

Wild Rose

SRP \$113.50

## COPIC MARKERS, AIR MARKERS, TONES, REFILLS

COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double-ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

### • Single Copic Markers \$4.95 each

100BG45 Smokey Blue	100R37 Carmine	200B01 Mint Blue	200E00 Skin White
100BG02 New Blue	100R39 Garnet	200B02 Robin's Egg Blue	200E000 Pale Fruity Pink
100BG05 Holiday Blue	100RV02 Sugared Almond Pink	200B04 Taffeta Blue	200E01 Pink Flamingo
100BG09 Blue Green	100RV04 Shock Pink	200B05 Process Blue	200E02 Fruit Pink
100BG10 Coo Shadow	100RV06 Cerise	200B06 Peacock Blue	200E04 Lipstick Natural
100BG11 Moon White	100RV09 Fuchsia	200B12 Ice Blue	200E07 Light Mahogany
100BG13 Mint Green	100RV10 Pea Pink	200B14 Light Blue	200E08 Brown
100BG15 Aqua	100RV11 Pink	200B16 Cyanine Blue	200E09 Burnt Sienna
100BG18 Teal Blue	100RV13 Tender Pink	200B18 Lapis Lazuli	200E11 Barely Beige
100BG32 Aqua Mint	100RV14 Begonia Pink	200B21 Baby Blue	200E13 Light Suntan
100BG34 Horizon Green	100RV17 Deep Magenta	200B23 Phthalo Blue	200E15 Dark Suntan
100BG45 Ne Blue	100RV19 Red Violet	200B24 Sky	200E19 Redwood
100BG49 Duck Blue	100RV21 Light Pink	200B26 Cobalt Blue	200E21 Baby Skin Pink
100BG99 Fragstone Blue	100RV25 Dog Rose Flower	200B28 Royal Blue	200E25 Caribe Cocoa
100BV00 Majve Shadow	100RV29 Crimson	200B29 Ultramarine	200E27 Africano
100BV04 Blue Berry	100RV32 Shadow Pink	200B32 Pale Blue	200E29 Burnt Umber
100BV08 Blue Violet	100RV34 Dark Pink	200B34 Manganese Blue	200E31 Brick Beige
100BV23 Gray sh Lavender	100T0 Toner Gray 0	200B37 Antwerp Blue	200E33 Sand
100BV31 Pe Lavender	100T1 Toner Gray 1	200B39 Prussian Blue	200E34 Oriental
100C0 Coo Gray 0	100T2 Toner Gray 10	200B41 Powder Blue	200E35 Chamois
100C1 Coo Gray 1	100T3 Toner Gray 3	200B45 Smoky Blue	200E37 Sepia
100C10 Coo Gray 10	100T4 Toner Gray 4	200B52 Soft Greenish Blue	200E39 Leather
100C2 Coo Gray 2	100T5 Toner Gray 5	200B60 Pale Blue Grey	200E40 Brick White
100C3 Coo Gray 3	100T6 Toner Gray 6	200B63 Light Hydrangea	200E41 Pearl White
100C4 Cool Gray 4	100T7 Toner Gray 7	200B79 Iris	200E43 Dull Ivory
100C5 Cool Gray 5	100T8 Toner Gray 8	200B91 Pale Grayish Blue	200E44 Clay
100C6 Cool Gray 6	100T9 Toner Gray 9	200B93 Light Crockery Blue	200E47 Dark Brown
100C7 Cool Gray 7	100V04 Liac	200B95 Light Grayish Cobalt	200E49 Dark Bark
100C8 Cool Gray 8	100V06 Lavender	200B97 Night Blue	200E50 Egg Shell
100C9 Cool Gray 9	100V09 Violet	200B99 Agate	200E51 Milky White
100E00 Skin White	100V12 Pale Liac	200BG01 Aqua Blue	200E53 Raw Silk
100E02 Frost Pink	100V15 Mallow	200BG02 New Blue	200E55 Light Came
100E04 Lipstick Natural	100V17 Amethyst	200BG05 Holiday Blue	200E57 Light Walnut
100E07 Light Mahogany	100W0 Warm Gray 0	200BG07 Petrosum Blue	200E59 Walnut
100E08 Burnt Senna	100W1 Warm Gray 1	200BG09 Blue Green	200E71 Champagne
100E11 Bareley Beige	100W10 Warm Gray 10	200BG10 Cool Shadow	200E74 Cocoa Brown
100E13 Light Suntan	100W2 Warm Gray 2	200BG11 Moon White	200E77 Maroon
100E15 Dark Suntan	100W3 Warm Gray 3	200BG13 Mint Green	200E79 Cashew
100E18 Redwood	100W4 Warm Gray 4	200BG15 Aqua	200E93 Tea Rose
100E21 Baby Skin Pink	100W5 Warm Gray 5	200BG18 Tea Blue	200E95 Flash Pink
100E25 Caribe Cocoa	100W6 Warm Gray 6	200BG23 Coral Sea	200E97 Deep Orange
100E27 Africano	100W7 Warm Gray 7	200BG32 Aqua Mint	200E99 Baked Clay
100E29 Burnt Umber	100W8 Warm Gray 8	200BG34 Horizon Green	200FB2 Fluorescent Dull Blue
100E31 Brick Beige	100W9 Warm Gray 9	200BG45 Ne Blue	200FBG2 Fluorescent Dull Blue
100E33 Sand	100Y00 Banum Yellow	200BG49 Duck Blue	200FRV1 Fluorescent Pink
100E34 Oriental	100Y02 Canary Yellow	200BG93 Green Gray	200FV2 Fluorescent Dull Violet
100E35 Chamois	100Y06 Yellow	200BG96 Bush	200FY1 Fluorescent Yellow Orange
100E37 Sepia	100Y08 Acid Yellow	200BG99 Fragstone Blue	200FYG1 Fluorescent Yellow
100E39 Leather	100Y11 Pale Yellow	200BV00 Iridescent Mauve	200FYG2 Fluorescent
100E40 Brick White	100Y13 Lemon Yellow	200BV02 Prune	200FRV1 Fluorescent Pink
100E41 Pear White	100Y15 Cadmium Yellow	200BV04 Blue Berry	200FV2 Fluorescent Dull Violet
100E43 Dull Ivory	100Y17 Golden Yellow	200BV08 Blue Violet	200FY1 Fluorescent Yellow Orange
100E44 Clay	100Y19 Napoli Yellow	200BV11 Soft Violet	200T3 Toner Gray 3
100E49 Dark Bark	100Y21 Buttercup Yellow	200BV13 Hydrangea Blue	200T4 Toner Gray 4
100E51 Milky White	100Y23 Yellowish Beige	200BV17 Deep Reddish Blue	200T5 Toner Gray 5
100E53 Raw Silk	100Y26 Mustard	200BV20 Dull Lavendar	200T6 Toner Gray 6
100E55 Light Camel	100Y38 Honey	200BV23 Gravish Lavender	200T7 Toner Gray 7
100E57 Light Walnut	100YG01 Green Bice	200BV25 Grayish Violet	200T8 Toner Gray 8
100E59 Walnut	100YG03 Yellow Green	200BV29 Slate	200T9 Toner Gray 9
100E77 Maroon	100YG05 Salad	200BV31 Pale Lavender	200V01 Heath
100G00 Jade Green	100YG07 Acid Green	200C0 Cool Gray 1	200V04 Lilac
100G02 Spectrum Green	100YG09 Lettuce Green	200C1 Cool Gray 10	200V06 Marigold
100G05 Emerald Green	100YG11 Mignonette	200C2 Cool Gray 2	200V08 Lavendar
100G07 Ne Green	100YG13 Chartreuse	200C3 Cool Gray 3	200V09 Violets
100G09 Veronese Green	100YG17 Grass Green	200C4 Cool Gray 4	200V12 Pale Lac
100G12 Sea Green	100YG21 Anise	200C5 Cool Gray 5	200V15 Malow
100G14 Apple Green	100YG23 New Leaf	200C6 Cool Gray 6	200V17 Amethyst
100G16 Malachite	100YG25 Celadon Green	200C7 Cool Gray 7	200V21 Pale Grape
100G17 Forest Green	100YG41 Pale Green	200C8 Cool Gray 8	200V28 Light Grape
100G19 Bright Parrot Green	100YG45 Cobalt Green	200C9 Cool Gray 9	200V99 Aubergine
100G20 Wax White	100YG63 Pea Green	200G14 Apples Green	200W0 Warm Gray
100G21 Lime Green	100YG67 Moss	200G16 Maize	200W1 Warm Gray 1
100G24 Willow	100YG81 Putty	200G17 Forest Green	200W10 Warm Gray 10
100G28 Ocean Green	100YG95 Pale Olive	200G19 Bright Parrot Green	200W2 Warm Gray 2
100G29 Pine Tree Green	100YG97 Spanish Olive	200G20 Wax White	200W3 Warm Gray 3
100G40 Dim Green	100YG99 Marine Green	200G21 Lime Green	200W4 Warm Gray 4
100G82 Spring Dull Green	100YR00 Powder Pink	200G24 Willow	200W5 Warm Gray 5
100G85 Verdigris	100YR02 Light Orange	200G28 Ocean Green	200W6 Warm Gray 6
100G99 O ve	100YR04 Chrome Orange	200G29 Pine Tree Green	200W7 Warm Gray 7
100N0 Neutral Gray 0	100YR07 Cadmium Orange	200G40 Dim Green	200W8 Warm Gray 8
100N1 Neutral Gray 1	100YR09 Chinese Orange	200G82 Spring Dull Green	200W9 Warm Gray 9
100N10 Neutral Gray 10	100YR14 Caramel	200G85 Verdigris	200Y00 Barium Yellow
100N2 Neutral Gray 2	100YR16 Apricot	200G94 Grayish Olive	200Y02 Canary Yellow
100N3 Neutral Gray 3	100YR18 Sanguine	200G99 Olive	200Y04 Acacia
100N4 Neutral Gray 4	100YR21 Creme		200Y06 Yellow
100N5 Neutral Gray 5	100YR23 Yellow Ochre		200Y08 Acid Yellow
100N6 Neutral Gray 6	100YR24 Pale Sepia		200Y11 Pale Yellow
100N7 Neutral Gray 7			200Y13 Lemon Yellow
100N8 Neutral Gray 8			200Y15 Cadmium Yellow
100N9 Neutral Gray 9			200Y17 Golden Yellow
100R00 Pinkish White			200Y19 Napoli Yellow
100R02 Flesh			200Y21 Buttercup Yellow
100R05 Salmon Red			200Y23 Yellowish Beige
100R08 Vermilion			200Y26 Mustard
100R11 Pale Cherry Pink			200Y28 Lotion Gold
100R17 Lipstick Orange			200Y32 Cashmere
100R20 Blush			200Y35 Maize
100R24 Prawn			200Y38 Honey
100R27 Cadmium Red			200YG00 Mimosa Yellow
100R29 Lipstick Red			200YG01 Green Bice
100R32 Peach			200YG03 Yellow Green
100R35 Cora			200YG05 Saad

### • COPIC MARKER SETS \$4.95

• COPIC Various Ink (Refills) \$4.95

200100 Black
200110 Special Black
200B00 Frost Blue
200B000 Pale Porcelain Blue

200N0 Neutral Gray	Neutral Gray
200N1 Neutral Gray 1	Neutral Gray 1
200N10 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10
200N2 Neutral Gray 2	Neutral Gray 2
200N3 Neutral Gray 3	Neutral Gray 3
200N4 Neutral Gray 4	Neutral Gray 4
200N5 Neutral Gray 5	Neutral Gray 5
200N6 Neutral Gray 6	Neutral Gray 6
200N7 Neutral Gray 7	Neutral Gray 7
200N8 Neutral Gray 8	Neutral Gray 8
200N9 Neutral Gray 9	Neutral Gray 9
200N100 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10
200N20 Neutral Gray 2	Neutral Gray 2
200N30 Neutral Gray 3	Neutral Gray 3
200N40 Neutral Gray 4	Neutral Gray 4
200N50 Neutral Gray 5	Neutral Gray 5
200N60 Neutral Gray 6	Neutral Gray 6
200N70 Neutral Gray 7	Neutral Gray 7
200N80 Neutral Gray 8	Neutral Gray 8
200N90 Neutral Gray 9	Neutral Gray 9
200N1000 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10
200N100 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10
200N200 Neutral Gray 2	Neutral Gray 2
200N300 Neutral Gray 3	Neutral Gray 3
200N400 Neutral Gray 4	Neutral Gray 4
200N500 Neutral Gray 5	Neutral Gray 5
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200N700 Neutral Gray 7	Neutral Gray 7
200N800 Neutral Gray 8	Neutral Gray 8
200N900 Neutral Gray 9	Neutral Gray 9
200N1000 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10
200N10000 Neutral Gray 10	Neutral Gray 10

200YG23 New Leaf  
 200YG25 Celadon Green  
 200YG41 Pale Green  
 200YG45 Cobalt Green  
 200VG63 Pea Green  
 200YG67 Moss  
 200YG91 Putty  
 200YG93 Grayish Yellow  
 200YG95 Pale Olive  
 200YG97 Spanish Olive  
 200YG99 Marine Green  
 200YR00 Powder Pink  
 200YR000 Silk  
 200YR02 Light Orange  
 200YR04 Chrome Orange  
 200YR07 Cadmium Orange  
 200YR09 Chinese Orange  
 200YR14 Caramel  
 200YR16 Apricot  
 200YR18 Sanguine  
 200YR20 Yellowish Shade  
 200YR21 Cream  
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 200YR24 Pale Sepia  
 200YR31 Light Reddish Yellow  
 200YR61 Yellowish Skin Pink  
 200YR65 Aloïl  
 200YR68 Orange

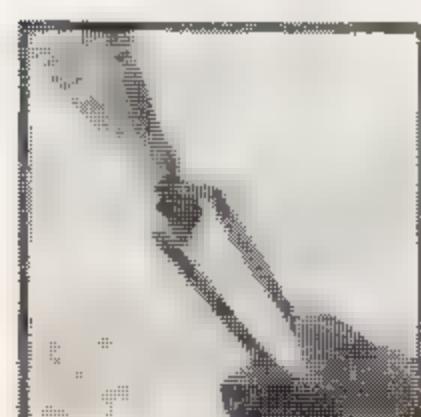


210 Various Ink Colorless Blender \$3.75  
 220 Various Colorless Blenders 200c \$9.75  
 230 Various Ink Empty Bottles \$2.65



**• Replaceable Marker Nibs \$4.20**  
 Another great feature about COPIC markers is their interchangeable nibs. From broad to calligraphy - provide greater freedom of technique in your renderings. COPIC nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass, plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application. Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of 3.

300 Standard Broad  
 310 Soft Broad  
 320 Round  
 330 Calligraphy 5mm  
 340 Brush  
 350 Standard Fine  
 360 Super Fine  
 370 Semi Broad  
 380 Calligraphy 3mm  
 385 Sketch Nib Super Brush  
 390 Sketch Nib Medium Broad



400 COPIC Tweezer \$4.20  
 Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no-mess nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques.

**- COPIC SKETCH MARKERS**  
 The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double-ended and is fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. COPIC Sketch markers oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your

hands. It paints as well as it draws. They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy). COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their reliable ink and replaceable nib features.

450 Colorless Blender \$4.20  
 45100 Black \$4.20  
 45110 Special Black \$4.20  
 452 Sketch 12 Basic Set \$59.40  
 454 Sketch 36 Basic Set \$178.20  
 455 Sketch 72 set A \$356.40  
 458 Sketch 72 Set B \$356.40

**• Single COPIC SKETCH Markers \$4.95**

45B00 Frost Blue  
 45B000 Pale Porcelain Blue  
 45B01 Mnt Blue  
 45B02 Robins Egg Blue  
 45B04 Tahitian Blue  
 45B05 Process Blue  
 45B06 Peacock Blue  
 45B12 Ice Blue  
 45B14 Light Blue  
 45B16 Cyanine \$4.95  
 45B18 Lapis Lazuli

45B21 Baby Blue  
 45B23 Phthalo Blue  
 45B24 Sky  
 45B26 Cobalt Blue  
 45B28 Royal Blue  
 45B29 Ultra Marine  
 45B32 Pale Blue  
 45B34 Manganese Blue  
 45B37 Antwerp Blue  
 45B39 Prussian Blue  
 45B45 Smokey Blue  
 45B52 Soft Greenish Blue  
 45B60 Pale Blue Gray  
 45B63 Light Hydrangea  
 45B79 Iris  
 45B91 Pale Grayish Blue  
 45B93 Light Crockery Blue  
 45B95 Light Grayish Cobalt  
 45B97 Night Blue  
 45B99 Agate  
 45BG01 Aqua Blue  
 45BG02 New Blue  
 45BG05 Holiday Blue  
 45BG07 Petrolum Blue  
 45BG09 Blue Green  
 45BG10 Cool Shadow  
 45BG11 Moon White  
 45BG13 Mint Green  
 45BG15 Aqua  
 45BG18 Teal Blue  
 45BG23 Coral Sea  
 45BG32 Aqua Mint  
 45BG34 Horizon Green  
 45BG45 Nile Blue  
 45BG49 Duck Blue  
 45BG93 Green  
 45BG96 Bush  
 45BG99 Fragstone Blue  
 45BV00 Mauve Shadow  
 45BV000 Iridescent Mauve  
 45BV02 Prune  
 45BV04 Blue Berry  
 45BV08 Blue Violet  
 45BV11 Soft Violet  
 45BV13 Hydrangea Blue  
 45BV17 Deep Reddish Blue  
 45BV20 Dul Lavender  
 45BV23 Grayish Lavender  
 45BV25 Grayish Violet  
 45BV28 Slate  
 45BV31 Pale Lavender  
 45C0 Cool Gray 0  
 45C1 Cool Gray 1  
 45C10 Cool Gray 10  
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 45C3 Cool Gray 3  
 45C4 Cool Gray 4  
 45C5 Cool Gray 5  
 45C6 Cool Gray 6  
 45C7 Cool Gray 7  
 45C8 Cool Gray 8  
 45C9 Cool Gray 9  
 45E00 Skin White  
 45E000 Pale Fruit Pink  
 45E01 Pink Flamingo  
 45E02 Fruity Pink  
 45E04 Lipstick Natural  
 45E07 Light Mahogany  
 45E08 Brown  
 45E09 Burnt Sienna  
 45E11 Barely Beige  
 45E13 Light Suntan  
 45E15 Dark Suntan  
 45E19 Redwood  
 45E21 Baby Skin Pink  
 45E25 Carbo Cocoa

45E27 Africano  
 45E29 Burnt Umber  
 45E31 Brick Beige  
 45E33 Sand  
 45E34 Orientale  
 45E37 Sepia  
 45E39 Leather  
 45E40 Brick White  
 45E41 Pearl White  
 45E43 Dul Ivory  
 45E44 Grey  
 45E47 Dark Brown  
 45E49 Dark Bark  
 45E50 Eggshell  
 45E51 Milky White  
 45E53 Raw Silk  
 45E55 Light Cameo  
 45E57 Light Walnut  
 45E59 Walnut  
 45E71 Champagne  
 45E74 Cocoa Brown  
 45E77 Maroon  
 45E79 Cashew  
 45F93 Tea Rose  
 45E95 Flesh Pink  
 45E97 Deep Orange  
 45E99 Baked Clay  
 45FB2 Fluorescent Dul Blue  
 45FBG2 Fluorescent Dul Blue Green  
 45FRV1 Fluorescent Pink  
 45FV2 Fluorescent Dul Violet  
 45FY1 Fluorescent Yellow  
 45FY1 Fluorescent Yellow  
 45FYG1 Fluorescent Du Yellow  
 45FYG2 Fluorescent Du Yellow Green  
 45FYR1 Fluorescent Orange  
 45G00 Jade Green  
 45G02 Spectrum Green  
 45G05 Emerald Green  
 45G07 Nile Green  
 45G09 Verdigris Green  
 45G12 Sea Green  
 45G14 Apple Green  
 45G16 Malachite  
 45G17 Forest Green  
 45G19 Bright Parrot Green  
 45G20 Wax White  
 45G21 Lime Green  
 45G24 Willow  
 45G28 Ocean Green  
 45G29 Pine Tree Green  
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 45G85 Verdigris  
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 45G99 Olive  
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 45R02 Fresh  
 45R05 Salmon Red  
 45R08 Vermilion  
 45R11 Pale Cherry Pink  
 45R12 Light Tea Rose  
 45R14 Light Rose  
 45R17 Lipstick Orange  
 45R20 Blush  
 45R22 Light Prawn  
 45R24 Prawn  
 45R27 Cadmium Red  
 45R29 Lipstick Red  
 45R30 Pale Yellowish Pink  
 45R32 Peach  
 45R35 Coral  
 45R37 Carmine  
 45R39 Garnet  
 45R43 Bougainvillea  
 45R46 Strong Red  
 45R59 Cardinal  
 45RV02 Sugared Almond Pink  
 45RV04 Shock Pink  
 45RV06 Cerise  
 45RV09 Fuchsia  
 45RV10 Pale Pink  
 45RV11 Pink  
 45RV13 Tender Pink  
 45RV14 Begonia Pink  
 45RV17 Deep Magenta  
 45RV19 Red Velvet  
 45RV21 Light Pink  
 45RV23 Pure Pink  
 45RV25 Dog Rose Flower  
 45RV28 Crimson

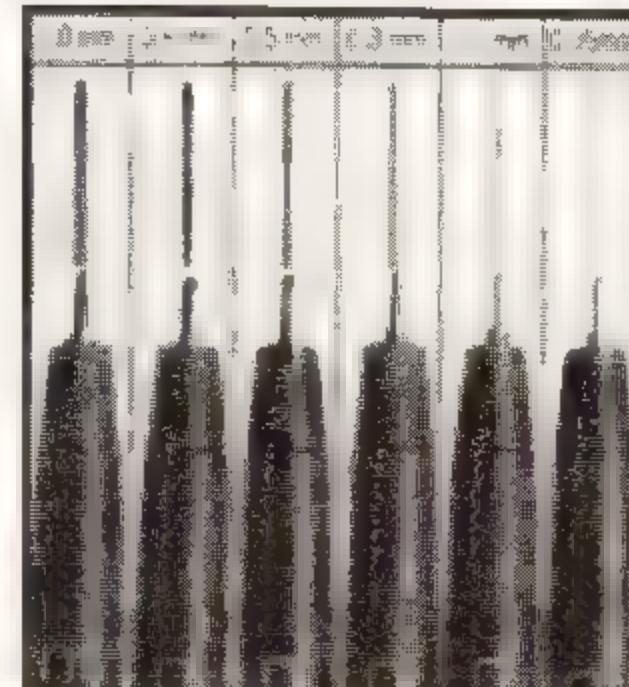
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 45T8 Toner Gray 8  
 45T9 Toner Gray 9  
 45V01 Heath  
 45V04 Lac  
 45V05 Mangold  
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 45V15 Mallow  
 45V17 Amethyst  
 45V19 Pale Grape  
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45Y28 Lionet Gold  
 45Y32 Cashmere  
 45Y35 Maize  
 45Y38 Honey  
 45Y00 Mimosa Yellow  
 45Y01 Green Bice  
 45Y03 Yellow Green  
 45Y05 Sand  
 45Y06 Yellowish Green  
 45Y07 Acid Green  
 45Y09 Lettuce Green  
 45Y11 Mignonette  
 45Y13 Chartreuse  
 45Y17 Grass Green  
 45Y21 Anise  
 45Y23 New Leaf  
 45Y25 Celadon Green  
 45Y41 Pale Green  
 45Y45 Cobalt Green  
 45Y63 Pea Green  
 45Y67 Moss  
 45Y81 Putty  
 45Y93 Spanish Olive  
 45Y95 Pale Olive  
 45Y97 Yellowish Olive  
 45Y99 Marine Green  
 45Y00 Powder Pink  
 45Y00 Silk  
 45Y02 Light Orange  
 45Y04 Chrome Orange  
 45Y07 Cadmium Orange  
 45Y09 Chinese Orange  
 45Y14 Caramel  
 45Y16 Apricot  
 45Y18 Sanguine  
 45Y20 Yellowish Shade  
 45Y21 Creme  
 45Y23 Yellow Ochre  
 45Y24 Pale Sepia  
 45Y31 Light Reddish Yellow  
 45Y61 Yellowish Skin Pink  
 45Y65 Aloïl  
 45Y68 Orange  
 460 Sketch 72 Set C \$356.40  
 462 Sketch 72 Set D \$356.40



**• 500 COPIC OPAQUE WHITE \$9.75**  
 COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects. It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces.

510 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4 \$9.95  
 520 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4 \$19.95  
 530 TOO Manga Manuscript Paper A4 \$6.95  
 540 TOO Manga Manuscript Paper B4 \$9.95  
 550 72 pc wire stand \$59.95  
 560 36 pc block stand \$29.95

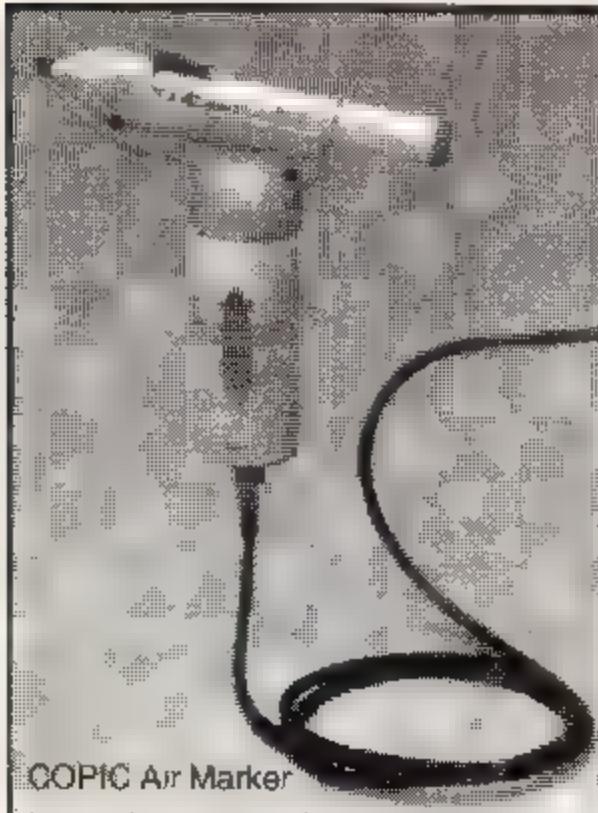


**• COPIC's MULTI LINERS** drawing pens allow drawing without annoying running ink. They are available in pens and brush. The pens come in a wide range of line widths (from .05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes, small, medium and large.

600 Multiliner 0.5 \$2.50  
 610 Multiliner 0.1 \$2.50  
 620 Multiliner 0.3 \$2.50



630 Multiliner 0.5	\$2.50
640 Multiliner 0.8	\$2.50
650 Multiliner 1.0	\$2.50
660 Multiliner Brush M	\$2.95
670 Multiliner Brush S	\$2.95
671 Sepia,ML 05	\$2.50
672 Sepia,ML 1	\$2.50
673 Sepia,ML 3	\$2.50
674 Grey,ML 05	\$2.50
675 Grey,ML 1	\$2.50
676 Grey,ML 3	\$2.50
680 Multiliner Set A	\$15.00
690 Multiliner Set B	\$20.00



COPIC Air Marker

**AIR MARKERS**

• 705 ABS-1 KIT \$60.95

ABS-1 Kit COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit. It comes with 1 Air Grip (where the pen goes in), 2 The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to). This canister is just a reservoir, it does not contain air. 3 The airhose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the canister). 4 The canister 80.5 The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of canisters). This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have the option to connect it to a compressor.

• 710 Starting Set ABS-2 \$26.50  
Set ABS-2 COPIC C Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the portable version of our airbrush system. The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip. This item is great for the artist on the move. ONLY the D-60 canister can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can. The other sizes of canisters 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter. They hold more air but are not so portable.

720 Starting Set ABS-3 \$28.50  
730 Airgrip \$17.10  
740 Air Adapter \$11.40  
750 Airhose 1/4 to 1/8 \$21.50  
755 Airhose 1/8 to 1/8 \$21.50  
760 Air Can D-60 \$8.95  
763 Air Can 80 \$10.95  
765 Air Can 180 \$12.95  
770 Air Compressor \$186.50  
810 NX Kit 2 \$15.00  
916 Too Professional Tone \$4.20  
(See the website for over 20 different types and styles of tones)  
96 Empty sketch marker \$3.60

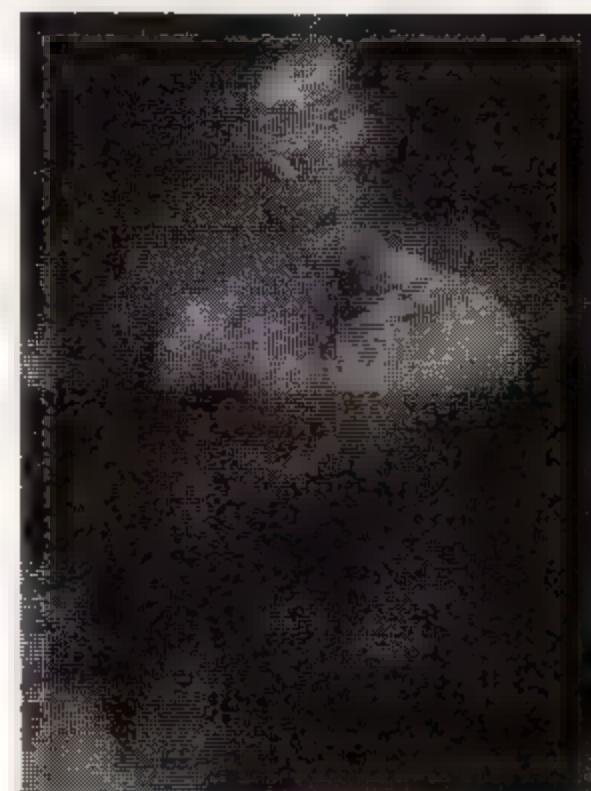
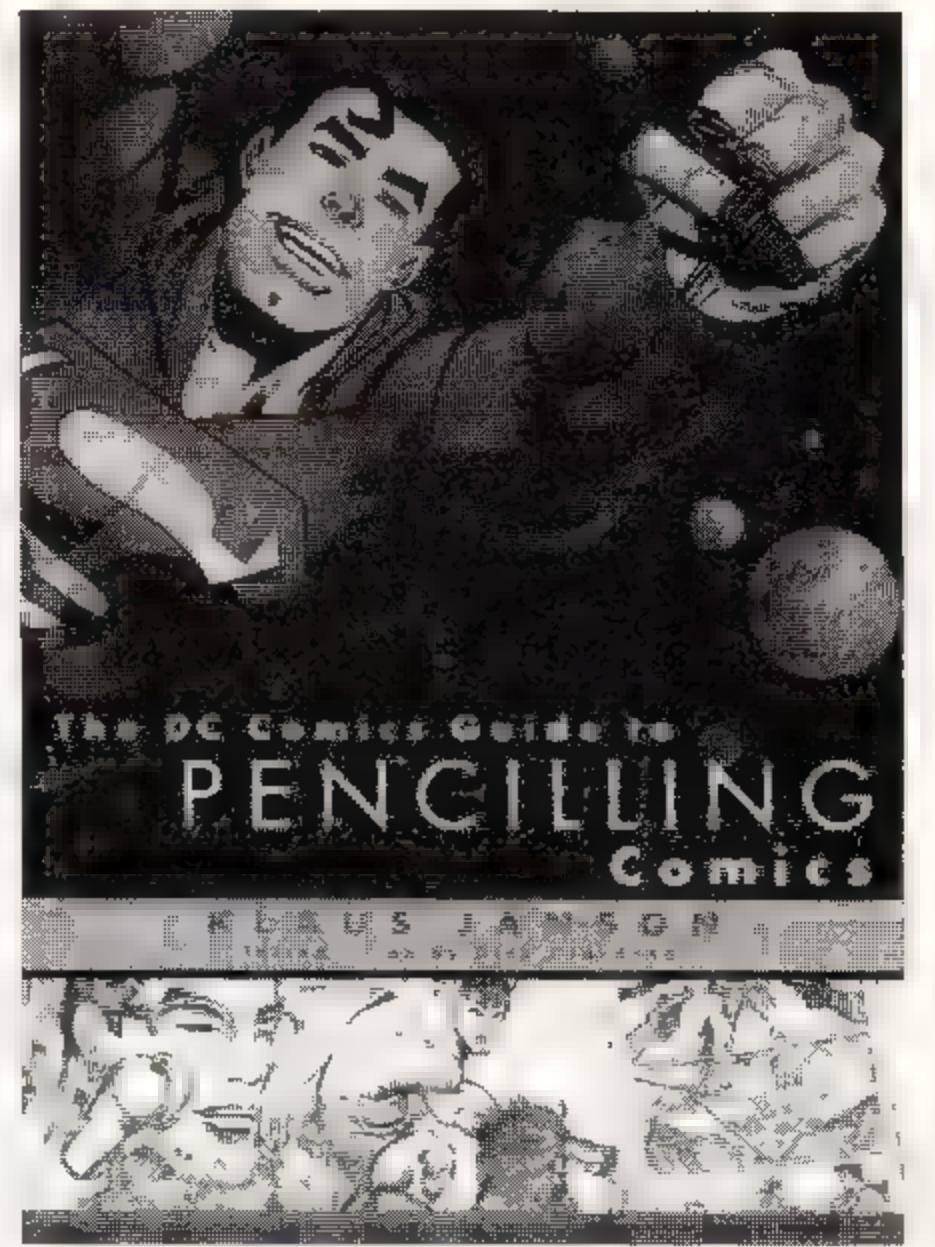
## THE DC COMICS GUIDE TO PENCILLING COMICS

By Klaus Janson

Covering everything from anatomy to composition to storytelling, Janson details the methods for creating effective visual communication. His insightful text is heavily illustrated with both his own work and the work of other comic book artists he admires. This book is packed with a wealth of tested techniques, practical advice, and professional secrets for the aspiring artist.

ITEM# AB1025 SRP \$21.95

Soft Cover, 144 pages of black and white illustrations.



## UNO FANTA

The art of Ashley (Spawn, TM, X Men) Wood. If you're a fan of Ashley's artwork this book shows many never published pieces from his portfolio (mature reader).

-ITEM# AB1019 SRP \$29.99

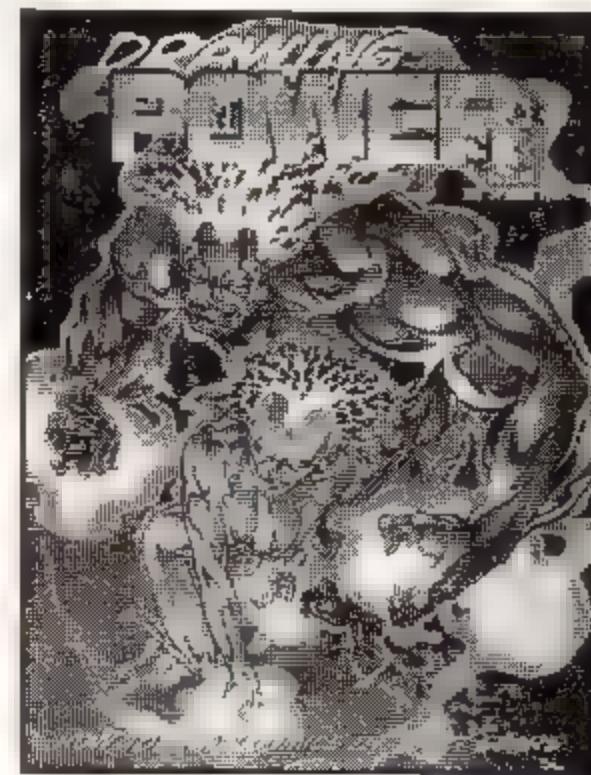


## DISNEY'S ANIMATION MAGIC

A step-by-step introduction to animated filmmaking from the producer of some of Disney's most beloved and celebrated animated films. Don't let the cover fool you. This book is packed with tips and information for everyone interested in drawing their own animation.

96 Full colored pages Hardcover

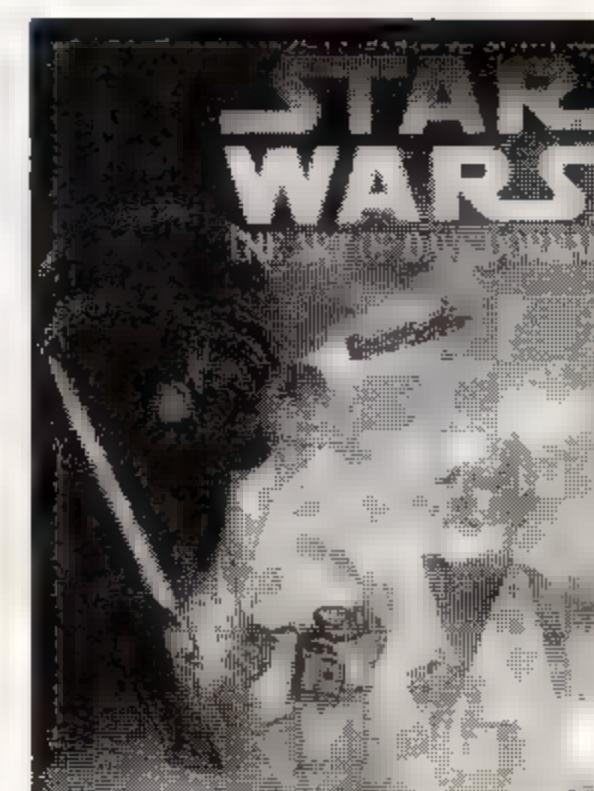
-ITEM# AB1013 SRP \$18.96



## DRAWING POWER

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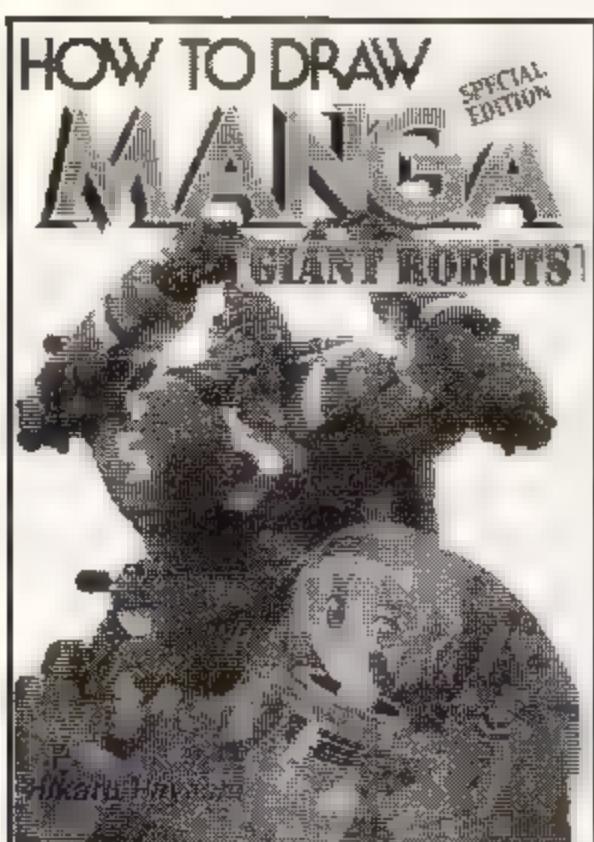
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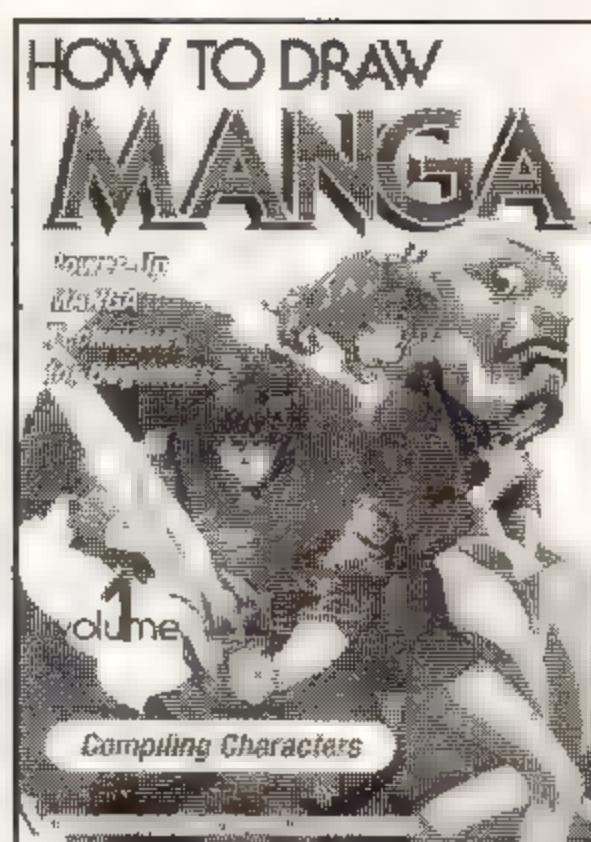
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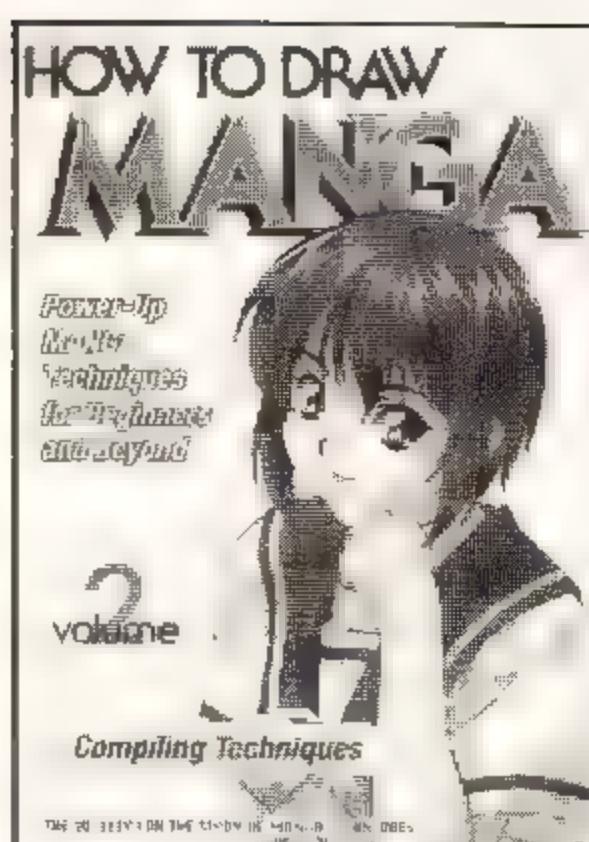
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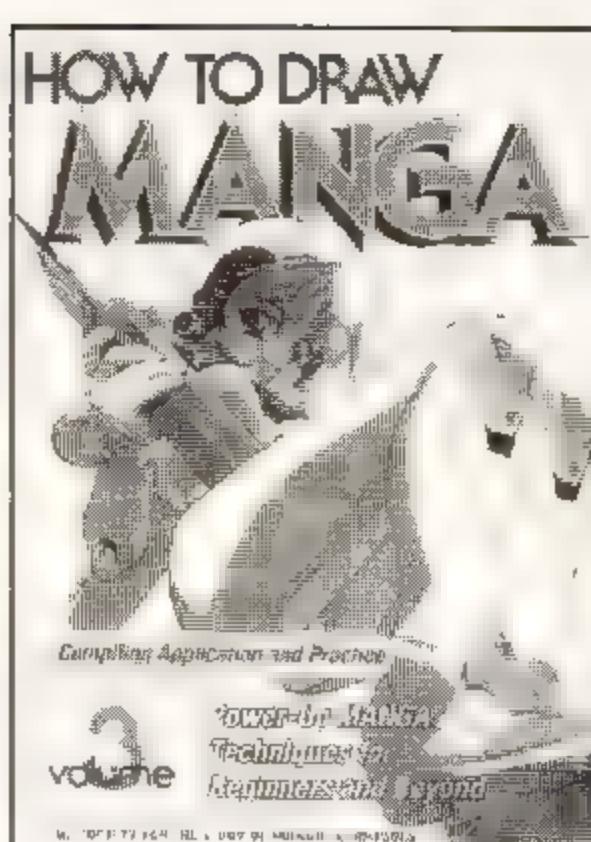
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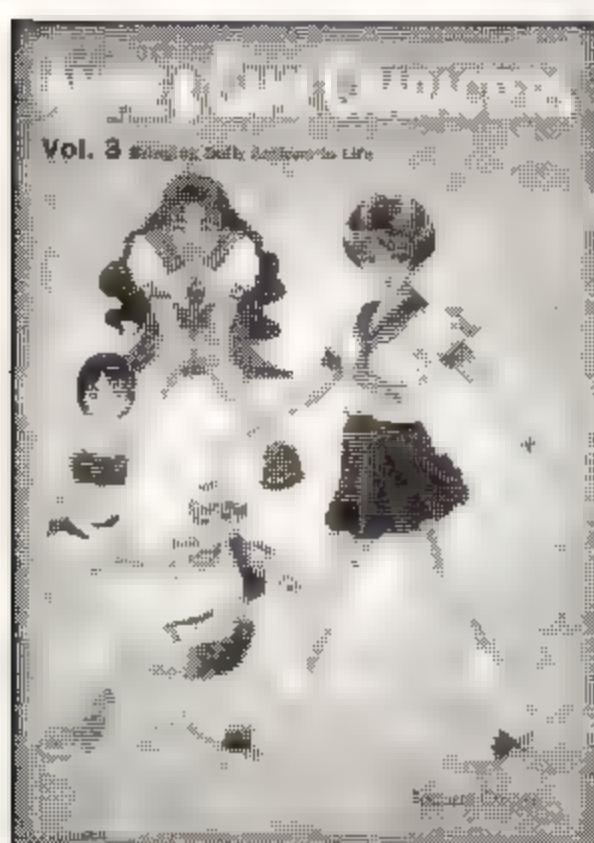
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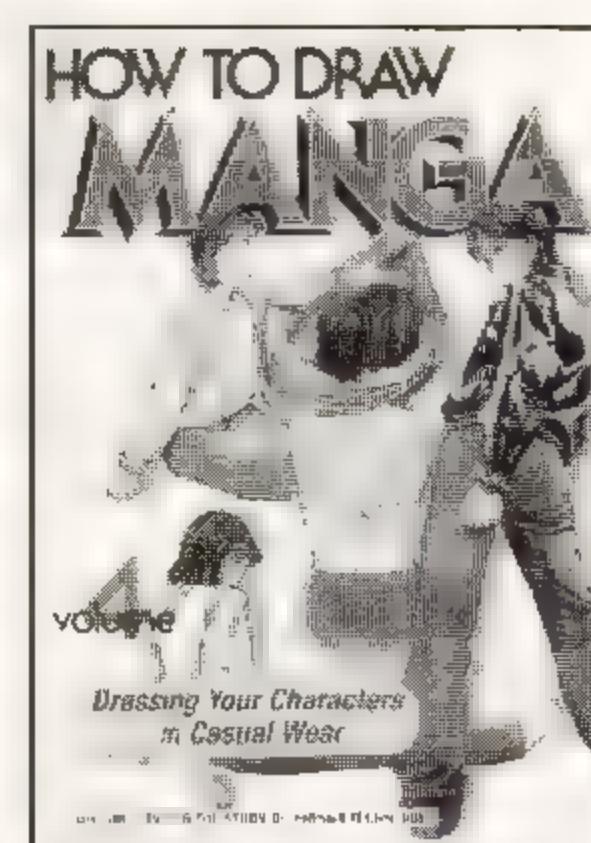
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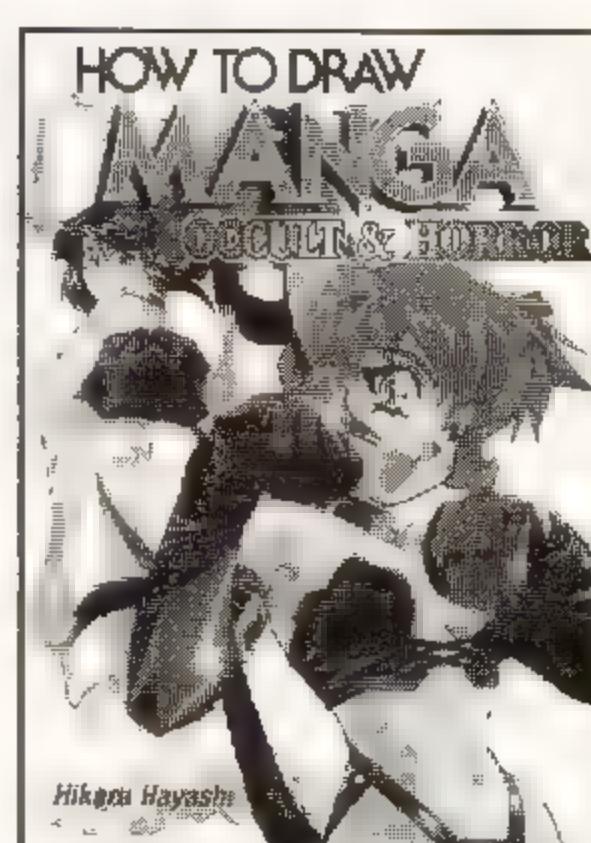
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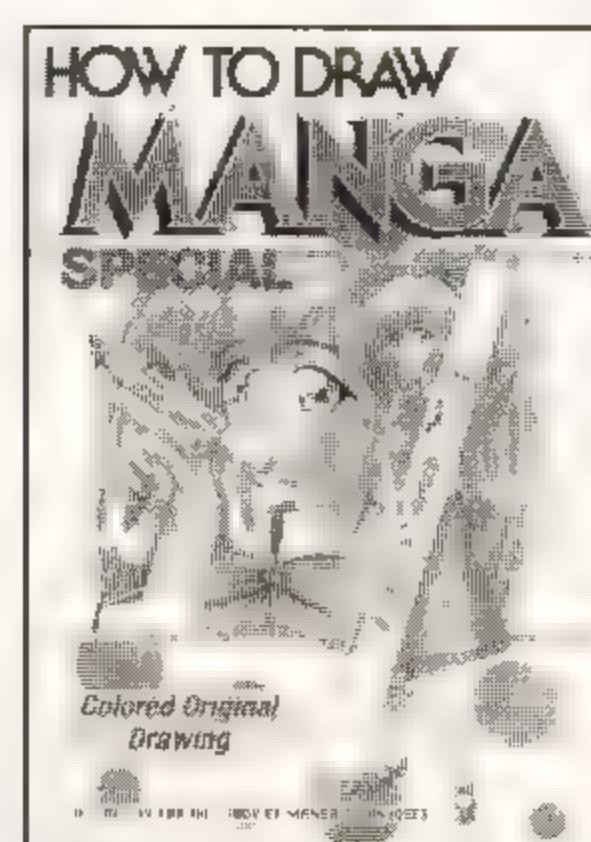
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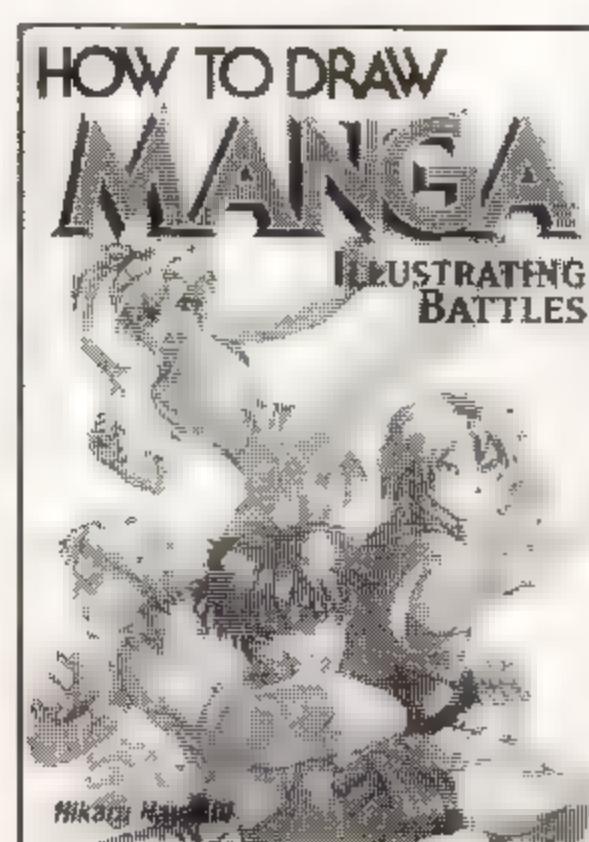
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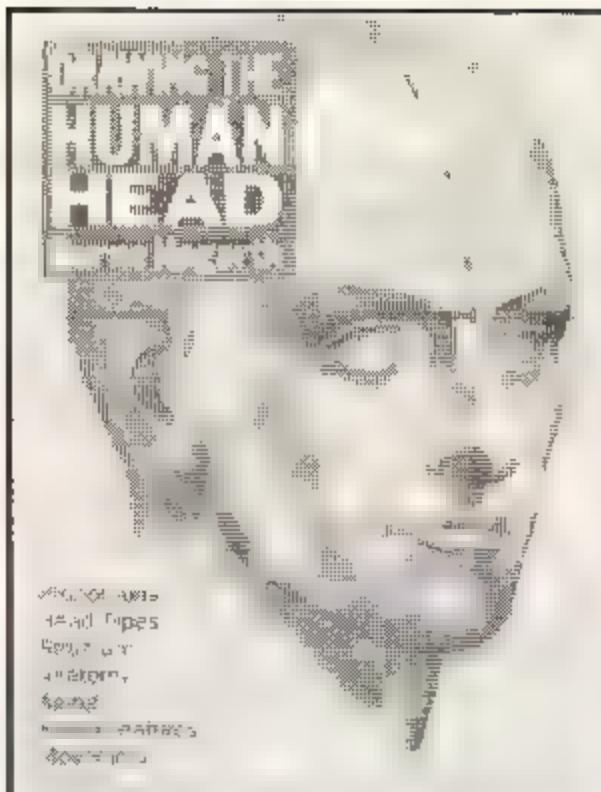
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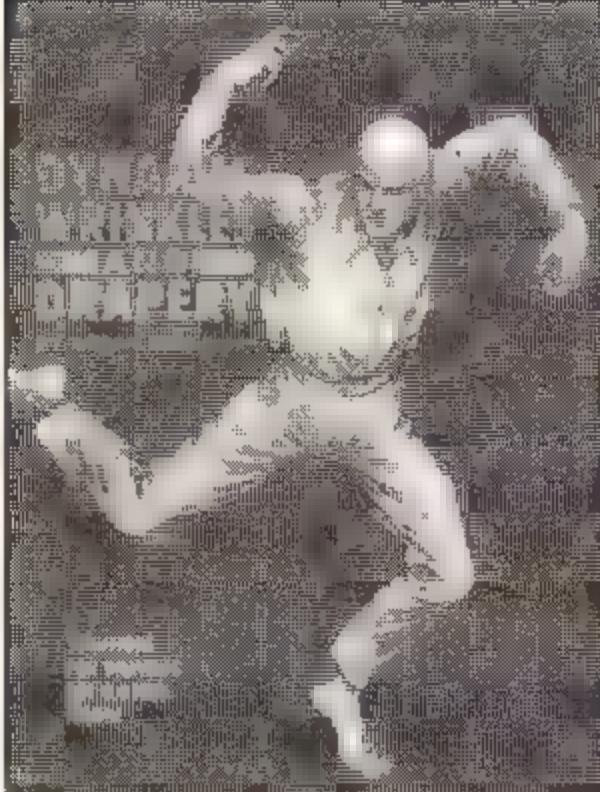
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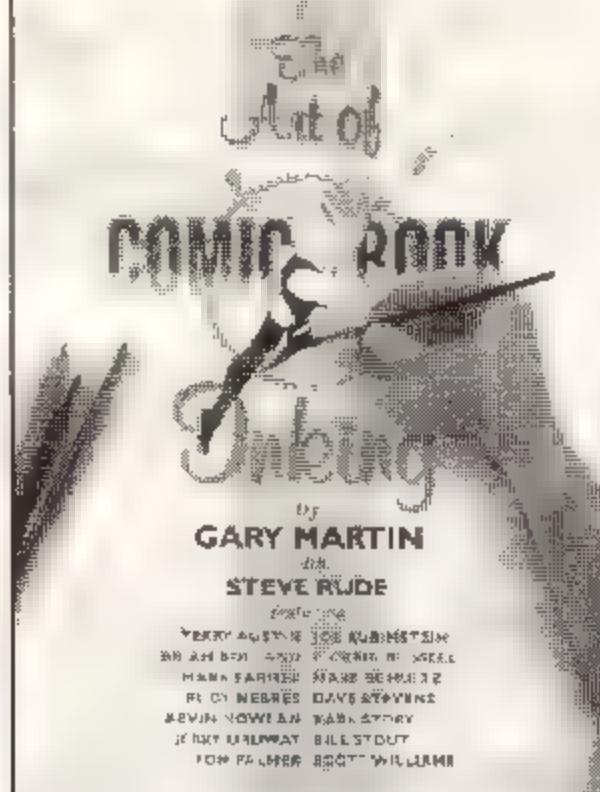
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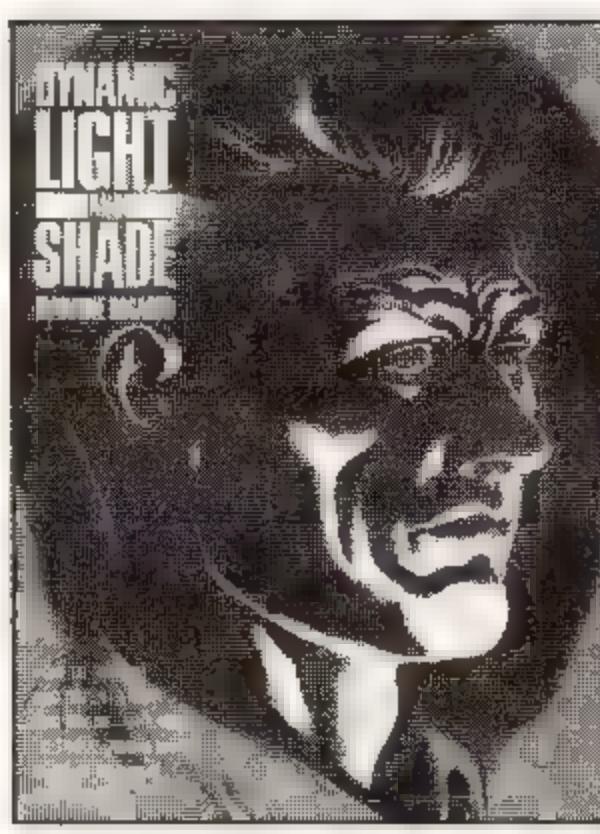
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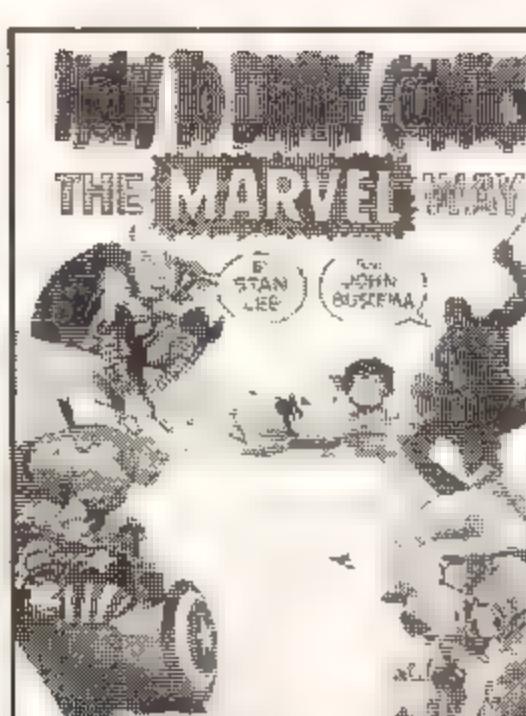
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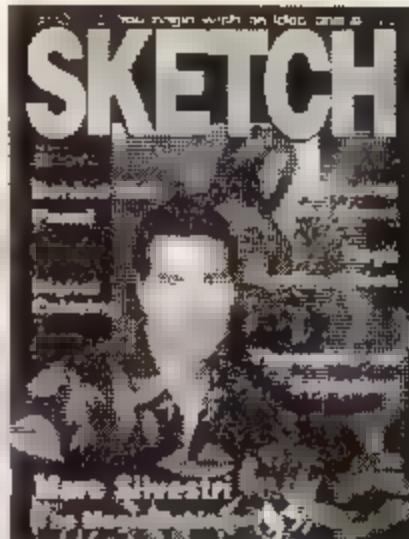
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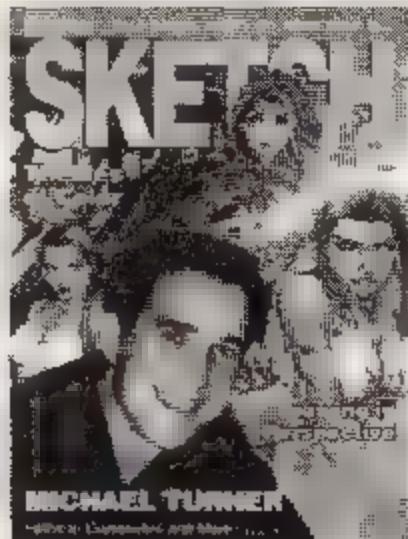
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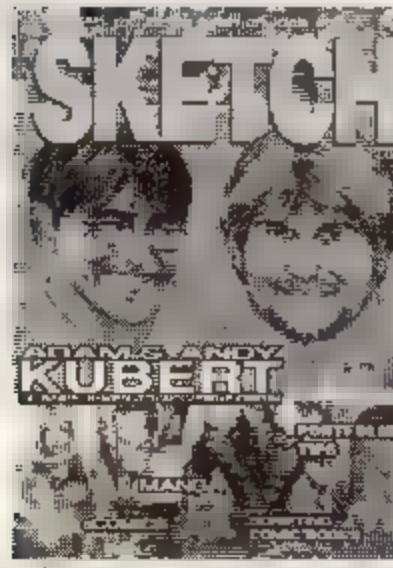
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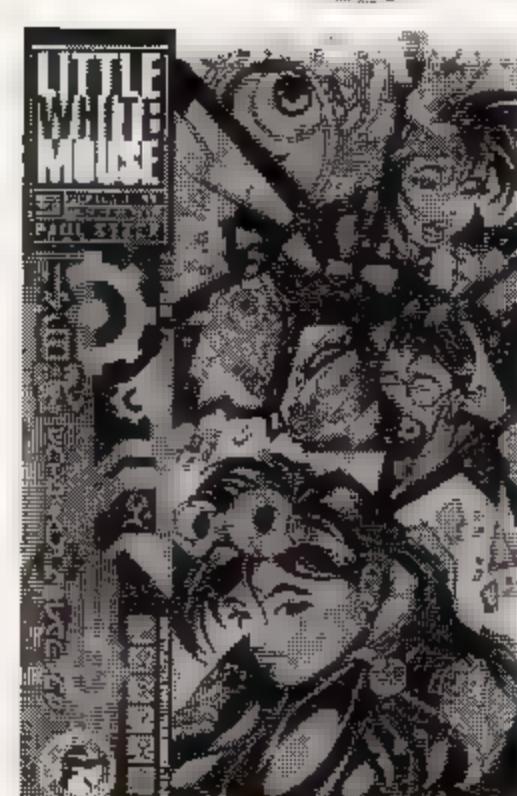
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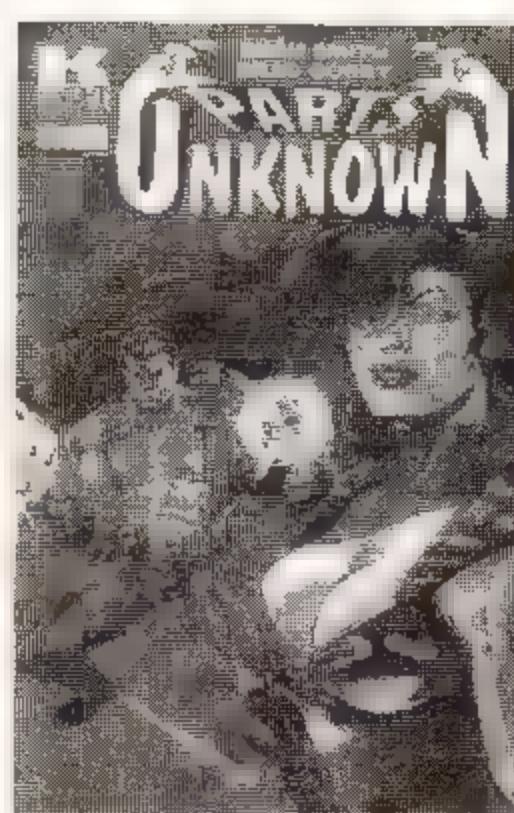
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## HILARY BARTA **PENCILS** and INKS!



When Sketch magazine's editor Flint Henry asked me to contribute a piece on inking my first thought was: do I really want to do another how-to piece on inking? My second thought was wow! That Henry guy is still alive!

I had just taken part in another magazine on inking, where several people all ink the same piece for comparison. I felt out of place because I really don't do that much inking anymore, and have often felt inking other's pencils to be an awkward process.

"Don't worry," said Mr. Henry, "you can ink your own work."

"Not that hack," I answered

I generally pencil tightly to work out balance of light and dark. I don't have to be an expert at spotting blacks in ink if I've already spotted them in the pencils

The drawing might look familiar to you - I found a sketch I had done for a recent *Tom Strong* story, and expanded it to the drawing you see here. Never waste anything, kids! Compare this to the splash panel in *Tom Strong* # 14. Of course, it might also be familiar because it's a rather obvious EC homage. And remember, it's cartoonish on purpose. So please, no let-



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ters about unrealistically elongated chins! I just wanted to pencil something fun and easy to ink. And what could be more fun to ink than a good old fashioned bug-eyed monster? I did the pencils on 2-ply Strathmore kid finish bristol board, with a #2 pencil.

This won't be very interesting technically, because I used a brush to ink almost everything. I usually ink with a big fat Japanese plastic brush called a Color Brush (actually, Color Brush is made by Pentel). The packaging of the brush I used for this is all in Japanese, so I have no idea who makes it. However, it's virtually identical to the Color Brush. They come with replaceable ink cartridges that form the handle, which you gently squeeze to get ink onto the brush. At least that's what you're supposed to do. I just dip them into India ink, currently Koh-I-Noor.

I like these brushes because they are nice and fat in your hand, which, after several hours of inking, is a lot easier on your fingers than clutching a thinner brush. I prefer inking with brushes in general because of their flexibility. You can get more variation of line weight with a brush than you can with a pen. I used the same

brush to ink the light feathering on the planet above the gun as well as the heavier lines in the foreground, like the spaceman's outlines, and the thicker feathering on the ground at his feet. The only details I did with a pen were the spaceman's pupil, nostril, and teeth, and a couple of the tiniest circles on his spacesuit. I guess it all comes down to what you like. I like Lou Fine, Will Eisner, Wally Wood, and Bernie Wrightson. All masters with a brush.

I pencilled this rather tightly, so there isn't much changed from pencil to ink. I started feathering the sky around the planets and liked the atmospheric effect, so I left out the blacks and outlines. After that I picked out some of the stars with Pro White.

The other illustrations here were all drawn for *Cartoon Loonacy*, a sort of club/zine I belong to. These are the kind of things I like to draw for fun.

Speaking of fun, I hope you have as much fun looking at these as I did producing them. Happy pencilng and inking!



**TOM BIERBAUM'S**

*The Universe at Your Finger Tips*

# Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

## *School for Comic-Book Writers*

Occasionally we current and former comic-book writers find ourselves being asked by high school and college-age folks what kind of classes they should be taking to prepare themselves to excel in this business. And it's a good question, since even writers well past the age of traditional education ought to be forever updating and improving their store of knowledge and insight, if they want to keep their writing talents as sharp and potent as possible.

So that's what I'll talk about this time - classes you can take, or areas you can research, to increase your chances of excelling as a comic-book writer.

### **1. Take Courses on Creative Writing and Great Literature, But Take Them With a Grain of Salt.**

There's no reason not to take classes about great English literature and how to try and write that way, but keep in mind that what worked for Shakespeare and what will work in a comic book are usually not the same thing. And don't expect many English departments out there to embrace and encourage your writing ambitions if they involve a lot of teen-age mutants and large-breasted ninjas.

Learn about the great writers and great writing not because that's what comics ought to be, but because they can inspire you as to what your comics *could* be.

The harder the industry tries to make comics into great literature the narrower its audience gets. Great literature itself doesn't exactly command a mass audience, and those who already enjoy great literature are sometimes the last people interested in alternative timelines and radioactive spiders. Here's what it boils down to - the point of most serious literary study is

to find and celebrate writing that delivers something in defiance of contemporary mass-appeal standards. And that's not the ideal place to train yourself for a medium that no longer *has* much mass appeal, and may not be able to support future creators if it doesn't get some back.

Still, if you use serious literature as an inspiration, a starting point for innovation, these kinds of classes can be of great use. Find a way to write comics that work for a wide audience of paying customers while working in new twists inspired by the great classics, and you'll be keeping the business healthy and its creative juices flowing.

### **2. Try to Get a Little Basic Economics.**

Research into economics will help you both in creating your fictitious worlds and in steering your career in the real world.

As the song says, "money makes the world go around," and if you don't have at least a basic understanding of how the economy and financial matters work, you're just not going to understand the world. And that lack of understanding is going to make your fictitious world seem kind of artificial and naive.

If nothing else, a little understanding of the law of supply and demand will help you avoid knee-jerk stereotypical depictions of all businessmen as greedy robber barons. There certainly *are* greedy robber barons out there, but there's also a system in place that tries to reward businessmen who deliver what paying customers want to buy - which isn't such a bad thing when you've got a few dollars in your pocket, and want the freedom to spend it on what you choose to spend it on.

A little economics in your background will also help keep in the front of your mind this important fact - you'll only support yourself as a comic-book writer if you create comics for which thousands of people are willing to pay real money.

### **3. Learn About the Law, Lawyers and Criminal Justice.**

If you're going to write about lawbreakers and law enforcers, try and develop a decent working knowledge of our legal system. It's easy and often acceptable to view lawyers, cops and judges in stereotypical terms, but once you start understanding a little bit about those worlds and why the people in them do what they do, the tendency to dismiss them as corrupt and clueless can be mitigated considerably.

This is probably one of the easier areas to address since there are so many courtroom and cop dramas on television, many of which work hard at authenticity. Plus, there's "Cops" to give you a relatively unvarnished look at contemporary police work.

### **4. Give Yourself a Working Knowledge of Science.**

This is one of my weak areas, since I moved around during my high school years and managed to go through all of high school and four years of college without a bit of chemistry or physics. So anyone who thought the futuristic science in *Legion of Super-Heroes* or *Stormquest* was pretty shaky might be on to something. I hope, though, that we knew enough to avoid too many major gaffes, instead presenting vague science that roughly could



You can study the great classics of English literature, but remember that the artistry of Shakespeare will have limited application when you're writing something like "Dead Kid".

have worked in the ways described.

Our Legion team took a drubbing from some readers when we had a group of aliens blow up the moon (it was actually Keith Giffen's plotline, but it fell to us to defend it in some instances). By coincidence a kooky Soviet mathematician had, at about the same time, advocated blowing up the moon to eliminate the tilt of the Earth's axis and end Russia's long winters, so some expert did the work to estimate what it would take to pull off such a crackpot scheme. This expert discovered it would require far more energy than humans could ever hope to harness to actually blow up the moon. How then, we were asked, do we justify the moon getting blown up in our story? Maybe this was an example of my lack of science education haunting us, but I tend to doubt it. Even if I had spent a few years in physics classes, I don't think it would have made much difference. For one thing, blowing up the moon may have never come up in normal class discussion. And come on, we're writing about a universe that has flight rings, time bubbles and magic. Heck, if planets can't be blown up Superman doesn't have an origin, and we can just skip the concept of super-heroes altogether.

It's all a matter of degree. If you're doing

the comic-book version of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," they're going to want your science to be pretty iron-clad. But if you're writing a Spider-Man comic, you need not spend a lot of time figuring out a scientific explanation for how his web formula works. It's just cool when you know enough science to plant a few unobtrusive clues as to how his web formula *could* work.

### 5. Don't Just Learn Science, Learn to Think Scientifically.

To me, the most important thing to take from science class isn't a series of technical requirements for your stories but a real grasp of what it means to think scientifically, and how it differs from thinking un-scientifically. Essentially, the scientific thinker collects evidence in a careful, objective manner, examines the evidence, forms a theory as to how the evidence can be explained, and tests that theory by making predictions based on the theory and then seeing if those predictions come true. If the theory repeatedly passes such tests, it's accepted as a good theory until it stops passing those tests or until somebody comes up with a better theory that explains more and

predicts more successfully.

The key difference between true scientific thought and the alternatives is that most pseudo-science starts with the theory deemed desirable, then goes about searching for evidence to support that theory. And when a pseudo scientist tests his theory, he only counts the tests that produce the desired results, always finding a way to dismiss the failures. By this standard, Atlantis, John Edward, creationism, O.J. Simpson's innocence, alien abductions, ESP, Bigfoot, and virtually any other phenomenon anyone wants to believe in can be persuasively "proven" to the true believers.

I realize I've just dismissed about every exciting, fun "what-if" scenario that contemporary pop culture likes to believe in. But if you check into the science of it, you'll find all of those concepts do, indeed, land somewhere between highly dubious and completely disbarable. And that doesn't mean you can't write stories in which this stuff is true — we're in the business of entertaining people with fantastic stories, not writing science textbooks. But when you write about universes wherein there really are lost continents of Atlantis and Pyramids built with alien science, do it realizing you're writing fantasy, not some possible "truth" that stodgy establishment science doesn't want to consider. If you take anything out of your scientific education, let it be an understanding of when you're writing about fantasy and when you're writing about the world as it really is.

I'm sure some of you are annoyed at this point, thinking, perhaps, that it's better for people to keep an open mind about such things than to let scientists tell us certain exciting ideas are false. After all, what difference does it make if people want to believe in Atlantis? Well, not much, as long as they're just having a little fun. But people, and even entire societies, can start believing in some of this stuff devoutly, and letting it feed a skewed vision of the world. Various forms of mythologized history and science have helped motivate just about every man-made atrocity in modern history. Certainly Hitler, bin Laden, McVeigh, the extremists in Northern Ireland, the genocidal maniacs of the Balkans and Africa, etc., etc. have all devoutly ascribed to some mythologized version of history and science to justify their despicable acts.

So it behooves us all to promote more sophisticated thinking in our society in the hopes that more and more people will reject

fanciful, mythologized thinking and the dangerous places it can lead. And there's no reason you can't start making a difference in these areas when you write your comic-book stories.

## 6. Those Who Don't Know History...

...Are doomed to write stupid stories that get it all wrong. So do what you can to develop a decent understanding of world and U.S. history, all the better to avoid a point of view that's completely couched in pop-culture assumptions and impressions of the moment. The essence of good writing is something that pushes the reader toward a new level of understanding, and one of the simplest, most effective ways to do that is to put your events into historical context.

By educating yourself about the past, you can explore with your readers both those elements of the human condition that are timeless and those elements that are truly unique to our modern world. For example, we're far from the first generation to start out believing we've been thrown into a world all screwed up by the previous generation, only to eventually come to view the next generation as dismally lacking in respect for all the hard work we've put in to make the world the best we can make it. On the other hand, we *are* among the first generations to know such revolutionary forces as instant global communication, widespread democracy, the threat of man-made global annihilation, etc.

One of the ways comics can feel like kind of a two bit medium is how it sometimes tells the readers they're the first and only generation to feel the way they do, while at the same time saying the world around them really hasn't advanced or changed despite all of the technological trappings of the modern world. That's a pretty attractive message for the current target audience of the comic-book industry, but it's also one that doesn't stand up too well to serious analysis.

So give yourself a little historical background, and give the reader a point of view with some knowledge behind it, not just an emotional, intuitive feeling that echoes the prevailing wisdom of today's pop culture.

## 7. Just as You Should Know Other Eras, You Should Know Other Cultures.

As discussed at great length in my last column, definitely seek out sociology,

anthropology and intercultural communication, areas of study that can help you look beyond the assumptions of your own personal standards and those of your culture.

For me, this is a really vital area of study for any fiction writer. If you never develop the ability to rise above your own personal and cultural frame of reference, you're doomed to write a pretty narrow selection of characters — mostly protagonists who are varying versions of yourself, and antagonists whose antagonistic actions don't make a lot of sense because you don't understand people who think differently than you do.

I never took any psychology, so I can't specifically recommend it, but my guess is that a good, insightful course that focuses on the real science of psychology (as opposed to, for example, the increasingly discredited theorizing of Freud) could be an invaluable tool for a fiction writer.

## 8. Don't Forget That a Little Knowledge Is Indeed a Dangerous Thing.

Resist the urge to do five minutes of superficial research and use what you find as a cornerstone of some project. When it's really going to matter to your concept, try to spend enough time in the area to have lived it, breathed it, and made it part of what you know and understand.

And when you're doing background research, remember to keep it in the background. If you figure out some actual science to explain Peter Parker's web formula don't make that the point of your story, because people don't read Spider-Man for a science lesson, they read it to experience the action and emotions of being Spider-Man.

A lot of your research and expertise will go unnoticed by 99 percent of the readers, and that's *okay*. The goal isn't to make them notice how much you know, it's to minimize how often they notice what you *don't* know. Ideally, you can slide all kinds of information and perspective into a story and have the reader never notice it, because he's too busy enjoying the story to realize he's also learning something.

## 9. Consider the Source.

In your education and research, don't take everything that's told to you at face value. Lots of people out there are trying to advance a cause or sell you something, and just because they make a convincing case doesn't mean it's true.

Jerry Falwell has found a way to make hypocritical intolerance appealing to his flock, Hitler sold his country on anti-Semitism and bin Laden has convinced his band of loonies that terroristic atrocities are blessed events. Just because somebody can make something sound like it makes sense doesn't mean it actually makes sense. In fact, many of the most important and profound realities of this world can be complex, difficult to communicate, and somewhat counter-intuitive.

## 10. Find Out What Other People Think, But Think For Yourself.

Find the teachers, books and leaders who want to help you learn to think, not tell you *what* to think. Ignore those who say their way is the only way, and that listening to the other side will lead you to ruin. Pay attention, instead, to those who say, above all, that you have to figure out the answers for yourself.

If that's the approach you take to your ongoing education, the ideas that start forming in your head will be new, creative and unique to you, and what you bring to comics can then be new, creative and unique to the medium. Learning to think well, and to think for yourself, is how you learn to write the kind of stories that only you can write. And that's what great writing is all about.



No law says your stories have to include real science or even particularly plausible science — this is, after all, a medium of sorcerers, time travel and x-ray vision. But you still want to work hard to make your scientific passages sound and feel credible to most readers.

# Minicomics Insider

with Sparky the Dog!

I'm Pam Bliss, and minicomics are my thing.

Minicomics are homemade comic books, reproduced in small batches on the photocopiers at your local copy shop or office supply superstore. I started making them way back in 1989, and I haven't stopped yet. Although I've done full size comics too, and recently published a trade paperback book, I keep coming back to minis for the pure pleasure of making my very own comics from scratch.

But why listen to me? If you want to learn more about minicomics, why not ask a real minicomics insider; the star of my very first project, Sparky the Dog.

(applause)

**Sparky:** Don't worry folks, I can talk.

**Pam:** Yeah, none of that "woof, woof" stuff here. Sparky, you've met a lot of comics creators over the years. Why do you think people make minicomics?

**Sparky:** I think it's mostly because they just want to make comics. Some people work for the comic book companies, big or small, some people self-publish full sized comics, some people make minicomics. Some people do all three things!

**Pam:** I know some people think that minicomics are for beginners - a first step in a comics career where the eventual goal is to be published in "real comics." Is that true?

**Sparky:** It can be. There's no better way to learn to tell a story in comic form than to make a couple dozen minicomics. I should know! The first few times you drew me, I didn't look much like a dog, did I?

**Pam:** Guilty as charged!

**Sparky:** But you got better at it when you practiced. And your first minicomics helped you get a lot of valuable feedback, too. I remember you gave a lot of them away to cartoonists you admired, and they told you what they liked and didn't like about your work.

**Pam:** I still do it that, as a matter of fact. **Sparky:** So, yes, a beginner can learn a lot from making them. But other people make minicomics too, including a lot of people who are doing professional work in other comics formats, or even other media. In fact, since you don't need a lot of money to get started in minicomics, just about everyone can make them! The minicomic is a great art form in its own right.

**Pam:** So what are minicomics about? **Sparky:** That's the great thing about minicomics. Since people make them themselves, and they don't have to necessarily appeal to huge general audience, they can be about anything that a cartoonist can find interesting. There's

a pile of them sitting here on top of the filing cabinet - let's see what we've got. Hmm...a science fiction story set on a space ship.

**Pam:** Here's a story about a little girl in the middle ages.

**Sparky:** People talking in a café. One guy is complaining about a bike wreck.

**Pam:** (Laughing) This one has some really funny stuff about zombies. Yeah, I see your point. It's a pretty wide range.

**Sparky:** I seem to remember one about a talking dog!

**Pam:** You're never going to let me forget that, are you? So suppose somebody wants to make a minicomic. How do they put one together and print it?

**Sparky:** Whoa. Slow down there, Charlie. First you have to make up some characters, and write a story about them. The easiest minicomics to put together are small ones, so it's better if the first story is a pretty short one. This is real comic book, though, so it should be a real story with a beginning, a middle and an end.

**Pam:** You're right, of course. But let's assume this person already has a story to tell. What's the next step?

**Sparky:** Then it's time to choose a format. This is a lot easier to understand if you get a few pieces of blank 8 1/2" x 11" paper and fold along with the description. These pages will represent the double-sided photocopies which will make up your finished minicomic. In fact, you'll have to do the folding.

**Pam:** Why's that?

**Sparky:** No thumbs!

There are two basic sizes of minicomic. The larger minicomic is the digest, sometimes called the "ashcan" or the "chapbook." It is simply a sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" paper folded once along the short side. Put the fold on the left, and you have a four-page booklet where the pages are 8 1/2" x 5 1/2". Now, that's not much space to tell a story, but if you fold another



piece of paper the same way, and nest it inside the first, you will have 8 pages, a third page, and you'll have 12, and so on. You can probably get up to around 40 pages before your comic will get too thick to staple.

**Pam:** Cool. So what's the other size?

**Sparky:** Well, that's a little confusing. The word "minicomic" is used for any photocopied comic, but it's also the proper name of the smaller sized format. Let's call it the "mini" for short. The mini is a single sheet of paper folded twice, once along the short side as for the digest, and then again. You'll end up with one crease on the left, and one on the top. If you cut along the top crease, nest the halves and staple on the left hand crease, you can make an 8 page booklet out of one sheet of paper.

**Pam:** So the pages will be 4 1/4" x 5 1/2"?

**Sparky:** Exactly. And you can add more sheets to make minis of 16, 32, or 48 pages. And if you make half sheets, you can get 12, 24, and so on.

**Pam:** So how does somebody decide which format to use?

**Sparky:** Well, some people prefer the digest, because the pages are almost the same shape as the ones of a standard sized comic book. But, since you only get 4 pages from a double-sided copy, digests are twice as expensive to print. The pages of a mini are smaller, but a lot of artists like their shape, which is more like a square. It's really a matter of personal taste, and what the creator thinks works best for that particular story.

**Pam:** So you have your story, and you've decided on a format. I think I know what's next.

**Sparky:** Yep, more paper folding. The next step is to make your dummy layout, which is a kind of full sized model of your finished minicomic. Before you can do that, you need to be sure how many pages your story will be, and how many pages of extra stuff you want to include.

**Pam:** Don't forget the covers.

**Sparky:** Right. Front and back cover, two pages. So say you have a twelve-page story. You might want to include an introduction (that's one extra page), and a page of ads for your other comics, with the address of your website and other information (that's another extra page). The total is 16 pages: a good size for either a digest or a mini.

Now take more of that blank paper and fold it to match the format you have chosen. Nest the folded pages together so you have a blank model of the finished comic. Do NOT staple or cut them. Then get a pen and label the pages. Write "cover" on the cover, "back cover" on the back cover. Your introduction will probably go on the inside front cover. Label that. The logical place for the page of ads is on the inside back cover, where people will see it after they've read and enjoyed your story. Label that. Then number the rest of the pages 1- 12.

**Pam:** Now comes the fun part!

**Sparky:** Unfold each of the pages of your dummy layout. (If you've chosen the digest format you'll have four of them, for a mini there will be two.) There, on both sides of each page, is the correct pattern for laying out your printing master to print that comic perfectly. If the copies you print match each of the masters exactly, your comic will have all its pages right side up in the correct order, and it'll look great.

**Pam:** I know it sounds complicated, but once you've done it a few times, it will seem easy. And it's really the most important step in making minicomics. I've made more than 50 different minicomics, from 8 page minis to 48 page digests, and I've made a new dummy for each and every one of them.

**Sparky:** If you need to see it to understand it, my "Minicomics Tips," [found next page] is a fun example of a dummy layout for an 8 page mini.

**Pam:** I bet a lot of readers are finding this planning stuff kind of a drag, even if it is really important. Is it time to start drawing now?

**Sparky:** Absolutely. You have a choice here. You can draw directly onto a piece of Bristol that will become one of your printing masters, drawing each page in its correct place as shown on your dummy. Or you can draw each page separately and paste them together later. I think most people draw them separately, since it's easier to make changes that way. It also allows you to draw your pages larger than your final size and reduce them on a scanner or photocopier before pasting them onto your printing master. You usually use a reduction, don't you?

**Pam:** I sure do. My eyes are getting old, and I can't draw that small!

My favorite reduction for a digest has an image area of 10" x 6", and I reduce it to 75% of original size before pasting it onto

the master. It leaves plenty of room for good deep margins. For minis I like 9" x 6 1/2", reduced to 50%, and 7 1/4" x 5 1/4", reduced to 62%. Other people have other favorites, so ask around until you find one you like.

**Sparky:** So, when you have all your pages done, and reduced to the right size if necessary, you can paste up your printing masters, using the sheets of your dummy as a model. But even though your copies will be double sided DON'T make double sided masters! Just make two masters, one for each side of the finished copy. This will be easier to make, and easier for the copier to handle. We paste up our masters with a glue stick, and put whiteout over any cut edges so they won't show on the copies.

**Pam:** Those are the dreaded "paste up marks." There will always be a few of them, no matter how careful you are. But try to avoid them. And your masters will work even better if you put them under a heavy weight to dry.

**Sparky:** Once your masters are dry, then it's off to the copy shop. A lot of minicomics makers use Kinko's or its local equivalent, but don't overlook office supply stores like Staples or Office Depot. You will have to shop around and find the local outlet that offers the best combination of quality, price and convenience.

**Pam:** What kind of paper makes the best minicomics?

**Sparky:** Well, most of the books I've been in have been printed on plain old 20 lb. white copier paper, and it's worked just fine. Black on white is just such a basic thing. If you can get a "bright white" paper, that's even better. Lots of cartoonists like to print minicomics on pastel colored paper, too. (Usually the other colors are too dark to show the artwork off to its best advantage.) Another popular technique is to print the cover on colored paper and the inside pages on white. And, as the prices of color photocopies and laser prints keep falling, more and more people are experimenting with putting color covers on their minis and digests. It just depends on your budget and what you think is best for your story.

**Pam:** So is it time to leave the copy shop?

**Sparky:** Check your copies first! Get out your dummy (always bring your dummy with you) and check that each copy has the right front and back and that they are matched up properly. If the shop did it wrong, make them do it again. It's also possible, if you are making a mini, to have the shop cut the pages in half with a power cutter. But we have a paper cutter at home. Digests, of course, don't have to be cut. Then it's a matter of folding, which is great to do in front of the TV, nesting the pages in the right order, and stapling them. A small minicomic of 8 pages or so can be stapled with a regular office stapler, but if you're going to make a lot of minicomics of different sizes, you will want either a

heavy duty long reach stapler or a saddle stapler.

**Pam:** You can even have the copy shop fold and staple your minicomics for you, but I think putting them together yourself is part of the process. Now the minicomics are finished. What do their creators do with them?

**Sparky:** Look at them and feel proud of having made a real finished comic, and also to see how they can do better next time. Put them in their portfolios as a sample of their work. Send or give them to other cartoonists to get feedback. Send them to magazines and websites for review. Trade them for other people's minicomics. Sell them at conventions or through their own websites. Eventually, collect them in a book. And, always, use them as an inspiration to make more minicomics.

**Pam:** I even make really small minis to give away instead of business cards. So, let's go over the steps to making a minicomic.

**Sparky:**

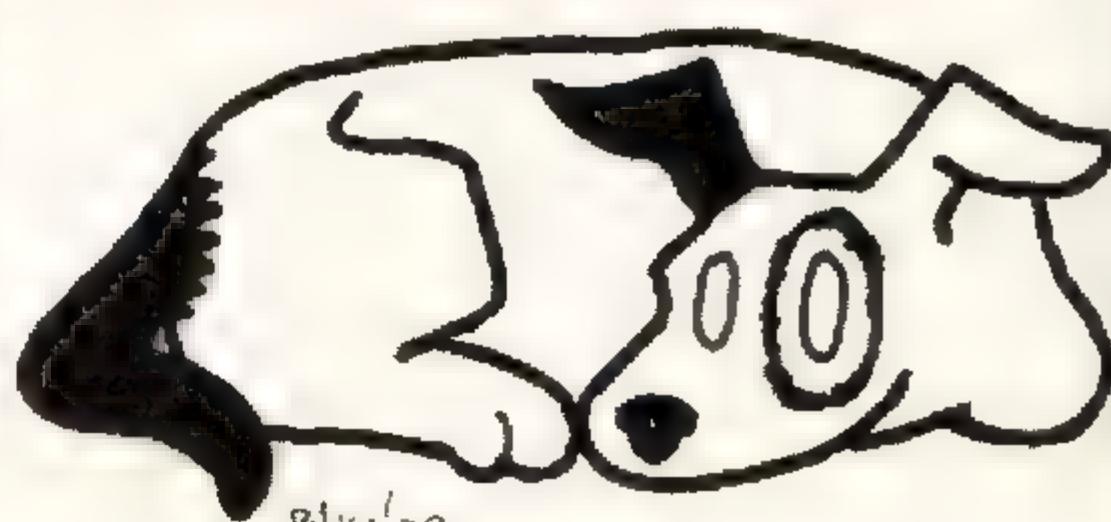
- \* Make up your story, and decide how many pages it will be.
- \* Decide on a format, digest or mini, and on the page count.
- \* Make a dummy layout as a model for the book.
- \* Pencil, ink and letter the pages.
- \* Reduce the pages, if necessary.
- \* Paste up the printing masters.
- \* Make double sided photocopies - use the dummy to make sure they match up correctly.
- \* Cut the pages (for the mini only).
- \* Fold and staple.

**Pam:** That's it. And it's way simpler to do than it is to describe. Any last advice, or words of wisdom, Sparky?

**Sparky:** I have a lot of little tips I didn't go into here, but you can read them in "Sparky's Minicomics Tips". As for words of wisdom: go out there and make your own darn comics. If you don't do it, who will?

For more information about Pam Bliss and her comics, you can visit her website at [www.paradisevalleycomics.com](http://www.paradisevalleycomics.com), or send a business sized self-addressed stamped envelope to Pam Bliss, PO Box 304, Valparaiso, IN 46384 for a catalog and sample minicomic. Send all that wonderful e-mail to:  
[paradisevalleycomics@yahoo.com](mailto:paradisevalleycomics@yahoo.com)

Pam Bliss © 2002



PAGE 3

a sample DUMMY LAYOUT for an eight page mini.  
Did you know? Sparky's Minicomics Tips is

PAGE 4

ROLL!  
LET THE  
TWO-PAGE SPREAD.  
AND DO A  
THE SPACE  
ADVANTAGE OF  
OR TAKE  
ADVENTURE OF



STAPLE

FOLD

STAPLE

CUT

IN AN 8-PAGE MINI,  
PAGES 3+4 ARE  
THE CENTRE FOLD.  
USE THEM AS TWO  
SEPARATE PAGES,

# SPARKY'S minicomics tips!

EVERY  
COMIC  
HAS  
A  
COVER.

THE  
TITLE

A  
COOL  
CARTOON  
IMAGE!

THE  
PRICE

(Free!)

THE CREATOR'S NAME

by PAM Bliss

SINCE  
THERE'S NOT  
A LOT OF  
SPACE  
IN A  
MINI,

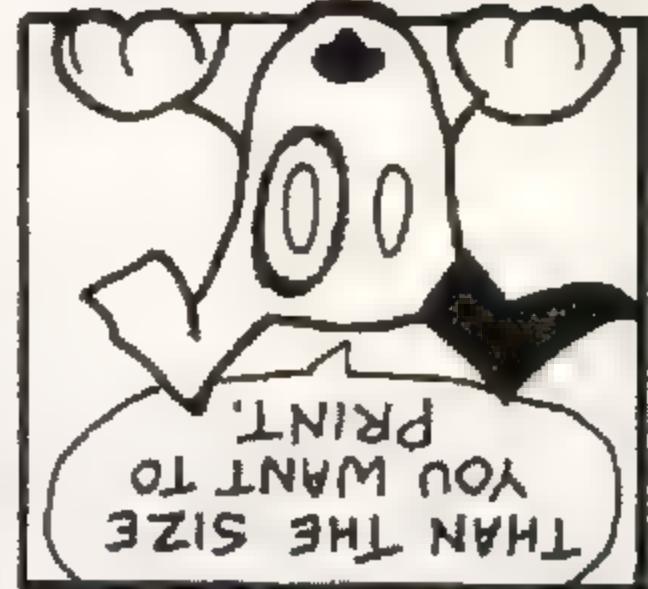
YOU MAY  
WANT TO  
FINISH  
YOUR STORY  
ON THE  
BACK  
COVER.

**THE  
END**

PAGE  
7

Steps to making a minicomic: 1) Make dummy layout to match your story.  
2) Finish pages. 3) Make printing masters.  
4) Print double sided photocopies. Make sure they match your dummy. 5) Cut, if necessary. 6) Fold. 7) Nest in the right order and staple.

FOLD



CUT

CUT

THIS IS THE INSIDE FRONT COVER. IT'LL PROBABLY BE THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR STORY.



Every comic book, big or small, needs indicia—the official copyright statement, plus contact information. The usual location is on the inside front cover, but the back cover is sometimes used.

**Sparky's Minicomics Tips** © 2002 Pam Bliss  
PO Box 304, Valparaiso, IN 46384, or visit Sparky on the web at [www.paradisevalleycomics.com](http://www.paradisevalleycomics.com). Original idea by Bill Baker. Corgis got white paws.

WHEW! WE'RE ALMOST DONE. IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A LONGER STORY, FOLD TWO OR MORE BLANK SHEETS, NUMBER THEM,

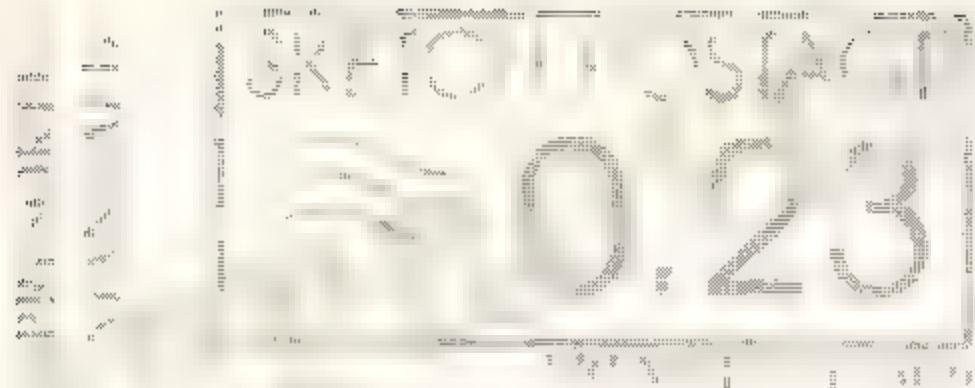
The story for an 8 page mini has to be ... pretty short.

take out everything that isn't necessary or beautiful.



FOLD ↗

FOLD ↗



# Letters Forum

Hi,

I've been reading Sketch for a while now and would just like to say how interesting and useful your publication is proving. I've been looking for a magazine like yours for years.

I have my own illustration and design business and some of your digital colouring techniques have really proved invaluable. Every issue seems to go from strength to strength, with a little more colour and creative layout you'll be unstoppable!

Any chance of interviewing Joe Madureira, Humberto Ramos, Simon Bisley, Glenn Fabry or John Bolton. Also, could you do some articles on adding textures to artwork in Photoshop. Organic and sky/horizon textures would be fantastic. You could even list some of the free filter sites out there.

Cheers Guys,

Scott Pearson  
Visual Evolution  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
Hi Scott,

Thanks for the compliments. Those names would make awesome features. We'll look into it. In the meantime, be sure to check out Blue Line Pro's Digital Colors for Comics, in which Sketch's own amazing Aaron Hubrich covers a wide range of important subjects, texture being just one of them.

M<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sketch,

Is there a computer software on the market where I can write, illustrate and create my own comic books on my computer? If so -- what would you recommend and what is the price range?

Thank you

Nick Mangos

There isn't an "all in one" program out there for what you need, but you could use different programs to achieve your vision. If you have a PC, you probably already have Microsoft Word. Use it to write your work, because it will catch most of those spelling and grammar errors that pop up once in a while. To illustrate graphics like logos and titles, I have found that Corel Draw gives you the most bang for your buck. It also allows you to lay out multiple pages of artwork. I use Adobe Illustrator to do graphics. Some other artists use Macromedia's Freehand. These are all good programs for design. You may also want to dabble in Adobe Photoshop if you plan on doing some high-end art but don't feel like you need to invest a whole lot of cash at first. Try looking around for older versions, learn them, and then buy upgrades when you can. To get started, you may want to save up \$200 to \$300 bucks. Check eBay or the internet for good deals.

Have fun!

-Aaron

Hi,

I was wondering what kind of paper you had that you would recommend for inking over pencil copies. I don't have a light table right now, so I would need a heavy-duty tracing paper that I could still see through on a regular drawing surface with a table lamp. Thanks for your help.

-Matthew Harrison

Hey Matt,

I use vellum. You can buy it by the sheet at an art store, or in a pack of 20. Here's what I would recommend. First get two photostatic copies of the pencils. Next put a thin layer of rubber cement over the copy's

All letters received will be considered for publication. Letters published will be done so as received in regards to spelling, punctuation etc., however letters may be edited for length, language, and/or other considerations. All letters should be signed by the writer, as well as including the writer's legibly printed name, address, and contact numbers (phone, fax, e-mail). Opinions expressed are those of their respective letter writers, and not necessarily shared by Blue Line. While open as a critical forum, it is Blue Line's hope and intention that correspondence maintains constructive and positive elements of criticism. Simple name calling, rumor mongering and/or maliciousness is not of interest. Unless our editor does it.

Please send your e-mail missives to [sketchletters@bluelinepro.com](mailto:sketchletters@bluelinepro.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

face and a thin layer on the vellum (read the rubber cement bottle, some suggest only one layer on either surface). Then carefully put the two together starting in the middle and working out to both ends, watching for air bubbles and wrinkles. Use a straight edge to smooth any out. Now ink normally. When you're done, separate the two and rubber cement the inks to art paper. Do any corrections once the vellum is on the art board. It's cheaper than buying a light table or building one. This is how I have done all my early samples, and still do. Good luck, Mat!

-Chris

Hi Aaron,

I have a question about color choices and palettes. At work, I match colors using the Pantone swatch book and the Process Color Guide. My monitor is fairly close to these, but basically the real color matching occurs on the NT box that rips the digital plates before they go to the plate-maker. The colors from the press always very closely match the colors picked from the aforementioned guides. But at home I have a nice Trinitron monitor, not a true pre-press monitor that can be easily calibrated like I have at work. I've used the Adobe Gamma utility to calibrate to the extent that one can, but the simple fact is that while my monitor calibrates well to my printer in that what the colors look like on-screen matches how the colors print off my DeskJet. Those colors don't match the Pantone swatchbook process squares or the Process Color Guide. Eventually I hope I'm able to afford a more professional caliber monitor, but in the meantime I was wondering if you've faced similar problems and how you handled it. Also, do the major comic book publishers provide you with palettes of colors to use, or do you use anything in the CMYK gamut you like?

Thanks for your time, and your great work on the column.

Best,

Chris Maka  
Denver, CO

I feel your pain, Chris. And I wish I could give you a good answer, but I try to work with this problem on a daily basis. As far as comics go, it may be really boring, but I only work with what I know will be more consistent CMYK colors. Every time I try to "push" it, I just get disappointed. Pantone colors are great but I would convert them before I send them to print. My suggestion is to make choices that contrast better to give the illusion of a brighter color. This may seem odd, but I actually like to do a printout on a "bad" printer, or a color copy machine. It gives me an idea of what colors are too weak or too strong, then I try to make my adjustments. This way I won't be surprised when I see the work on the shelf. The monitor I use tends to be on the bright side, so I take the opportunity to look at my colors on a small, darker monitor in the studio before I do a print out.

I wish you luck!

Aaron

Hello,

I saw your article in the "Sketch" magazine, and I have a question about how you said about the two different layers, the LINE ART and the COLOUR ART. I don't have the regular "Photoshop", I have "Photoshop LE (Limited edition)". Instead of doing the two different layers (for it won't do that), I

just make sure that all the layers are in DARKEN. Is that an okay way to colour? Thank you!

Jen

I'll be flat out honest with you. I've never worked with Photoshop LE, so I don't really know how to answer your question. My guess is you can have your line art on the 'bottom' layer and add a layer to color on. If this new layer gives you the setting of "multiply", you should be okay to color on top of your line art without covering up the black line. Play with your brush settings "screen" and "multiply" to lighten and darken the color. That is, if Photoshop LE gives you that option. 99% of what I cover will be for Photoshop 5.0 through 6.0, so consider investing in one of these versions in the future so you're not getting frustrated with what Photoshop LE can't do.

-Aaron

To whom it may concern,

Three months ago I found a site on the Internet full of aspiring comic book artists, who commented, critiqued, and encouraged each other. The site was called <http://www.comixmatrix.com>

About a month ago, this wonderful site that was full of spectacular art and artists, closed down. No more feed back, no more draw off challenges, nothing. Have you heard anything about this site, and/or, do you know of another site that might be comparable? If you have any info, I would really appreciate it. My name is Saleem Saad.

Thanks

Anybody know?

M

Dear Sketch,

I wrote a couple letters during the early issues of Sketch magazine, voicing my criticism of the production quality of the publication. After over a year I have enjoyed seeing the layout and editorial content steadily improve. Sketch is consistently the best source of current industry practices available in the field. In fact, Blue Line Pro's entire product line continues to expand with invaluable resources for your readers. I compliment you on your devotion to the field of comic art, the insightful contributors in each issue of Sketch, and your obvious improvement in the quality of your material.

I have a couple ideas that I would like to pass on.

During last year's Wizard World Chicago, I was again delighted to find the BLP booth near Artists Alley. I enjoyed seeing the product line on display and talking with you and your friendly staff. Your floor section was fairly large too from what I remember. You had Paul Sizer's booth next door too. I think it would be great if you had some guest artists doing demos periodically during conventions. It would draw a lot of people to your booth and be a great cross-promotional technique for BLP and the artist. For instance, you could have a computer set up for a demo on digital coloring. During the demo you could have the demonstrator reference your new guide to digital coloring. I think that would not only be great for fans to see, but it would also draw some revenue from the dazzled crowd.

I like your website very much, but it is mostly only used for online ordering and finding out what's in the next issue. I think you may not be tapping into the medium's full potential. Your website would work great as an extension to the magazine. For example, when folks do a search on Google for comic

art tutorials they may be directed to your site because you've put some valuable content such as an excerpt from a recent article. Or you could have some line art down loadable for use with the current article on coloring. Place a demo font to use with the lettering column. Reader art could go online. Remember Wizard's cover art contests that ran every month? I don't know why they dropped that. Aspiring artists LOVE to see other aspiring artists work, and that was the forum to do that. You could do something like that, and publish it only on your site. Then you could have the winner feature on part o' a page in the magazine. You'd hook web searchers who find B.I.P. via a search engine. You'd provide your subscribers with even more value by supplementing the printed issue. Overall you would solidify your base of readers.

Thanks again for your time. I'd be interesting in hearing what you think of these ideas so please drop me a line if you have a chance.

Nate Barnes  
Pleased Penciler

Hello Nate,

*It's always good to hear from you.*

*For those that don't keep a letters column scorecard, Nate is just the kind of reader that we've hoped to reach with Sketch since our beginning. He's checked in on us over a span of issues, letting us know when we're screwing up and when we're on the mark. But most importantly, he uses Sketch to help fuel his own creative fires and then bounces some of that creative energy right back to Sketch and the rest of our audience, with a regularity that we hope more readers pick up on. There's nothing like sharing some of that all-important excitement and idea crunching to help spur everyone on.*

*Nate thanks for the great suggestions although we've been concentrating on improving Sketch itself (thanks for noticing!), we're working on a number of ideas concerning our web presence and other related areas, so don't be surprised if you see some of your ideas implemented.*

*We hope to see you at Chicago again this year. Let us check out some of those pencils of yours but don't ask for royalties on those ideas you just gave us!*

*We look forward to your next letter, Nate. Keep Sketching*

F

Dear Tom [Bierbaum],

If I may call you that, I have just finished your article in issue 12 "the Frank Cho issue" and I read your article in issue 11 and I just wanted to tell you how truly inspired I have been by both. I am a new reader to your magazine, with issue 11 being my first. If the writing I've seen so far is any indication of the consistency I can expect then I'm truly sold on it. To me it seems as though you and I think a lot alike. I fully agree with what you had to say in issue 11 about how we shouldn't go around knocking someone's work just because that is not the type of story or art that we enjoy. I also agreed with what you were saying about how we need to take a pulse of what may appeal to the new younger generation that is just now discovering comics and see if what is being put out there is really what they're looking for in entertainment.

When I first discovered comics as a child I fell in love with the "Spiderman" titles because he was a real person type of character who was believable and I could identify with the problems he had to deal with. I am a fan of comics from the 60's and 70's when the characters seemed more like real people who special powers thrust upon them and had to come to grips with how to deal with them. I think maybe if we went back to those kinds characters they could win back some of the readers they have lost and also attract the young readers just now finding comic books.

As for your article in issue 12 you seem to be reaffirming what I thought you were saying. I enjoyed the article's subject matter. As someone who is just trying to enter the writing field I think what you had

to say can apply across all fields of writing and not just comic scripting. As soon as I can save enough to purchase a subscription to Sketch Magazine I fully intend to do just that because I read your book from cover to cover which is not the norm with magazines such as Wizard and I am now a loyal Sketch reader. I just wanted to let you know how much I have enjoyed your writings and look forward to reading your next article.

Until then I am a new faithful fan,

Tom Sandlin

Thanks Tom,

*Tom appreciates your support. Mr. Bierbaum has been with us since nearly the beginning, and I'm looking forward to what else he has in store as well. Go, Tom, go!*

M2

Hello Joe,

I currently draw my own comic book as a hobby. I'm starting to enjoy it so much that I would like to know how to do this professionally. I have a couple things I like to run by you and get your advice on:

1) I need to learn everything from the correct type and dimensions of paper to use to inks and brushes (which I have never used to design any of my books). For pencils, I have only used a #2 pencil, for "inks", I have only used ink pens and art markers.

2) Are there any resources out there that can provide me with enough information to draw a "professional" comic book (from A-Z) that would be ready to be submitted to a printer/publisher?

3) Is there also an information source you could recommend that may have an analysis of the current comic book market?

4) Have you experienced any "lessons learned" regarding comics (how to's/the business) that you could share?

5) I enjoyed your web page and found your comic book tips very helpful.

Thanking you in advance,

Charles Griswold

Hi Charles,

*I For drawing your comics I'd use 2 or 3ply 11x17 inch bristol board with a 'vellum' finish. I enjoy the texture and tooth of a vellum finish on bristol board since a 'plate' finish is very smooth, and can be a bit more tricky to pencil on in terms of getting the graphite to apply properly. The standard 'live area' on the board to contain your sequential page design in is usually 10x15 inches with the rest of the board (the outside area) considered the 'bleed' or non-printable area. Though you can continue your artwork into the bleed area you have to plan for a portion of it (perhaps a 1/4 to 1/2 inch), to be cropped when it's printed. You can also buy pre-measured 'official' comic art drawing board from Blue Line Pro. They make great comic drawing paper and carry a ton of art supplies too. It's usually best to have a wide range of pencils for different kinds of approaches to rendering lines and textures and shading. Though some artists get by with just one trusty pencil, so there's really no right answer. Just experiment to find the right hardness or softness of leads that feel right for you. The same kinds of rules apply to inking. Though I'd stay away from regular tech pens and markers. If you want to do any professional looking inking you need to start practicing with a Hunt's Crowquill dip pen (an industry standard) and some India ink. Also taking up practice with Windsor Newton brushes would be a good idea too. A variety of tips ranging from size 0 to 3 should be fine.*

*2) You need to check out Sketch magazine if you haven't done so already. It's a magazine I write for, and every issue so far has covered many of the questions you want answers for, along with other aspects of the profession you may not have even thought of.*

*3) I'd check out your local comic book store and ask the retailer which magazines on the shelves could best help answer those questions. I imagine Overstreet's Price Guide is a good publication to*

*start but magazines like Wizard can usually give you an idea of current 'trends' in the market.*

*4) The most important lesson I've learned is never get discouraged and never give up. You're always closer than you think, and usually most of the trials you encounter along your pursuits are mental and can be defeated since it's only a state of mind. As long as you stay focused, pay attention and listen to the advice of other professionals who are willing to help and encourage you, you'll be successful.*

*5) Thanks, Charles. I'm really glad you found my site and checked it out. I'm also glad you enjoyed my column and hope this reply helps you in your artistic endeavors. Keep drawing!*

Joe

Mr Dreier,

I just finished reading your column in the latest issue of Sketch on inking the figure and I wanted to say thanks for the tips. I have been trying to get work as an inker and I was wondering if you could answer a few questions for me:

1) What was your first work and how did you get it?

2) Who are your favorite inkers, and who did you learn the most from?

3) What is your daily schedule like (how much do you do a day)?

4) One other thing, which of the Blue Line pages is most like the pages you get from Dark Horse?

5) And, the big one, would you take a look at my samples? I would love to hear from a pro.

Thanks again,

Robert Jones

Robert,

*I'm happy to hear that my articles are helping you out. Let's get to your questions.*

*1) My first work was on Riot Gear from Triumphant Comics. I got the job because I knew the inker of another title that they were publishing. However one month later I received a call from Now Comics. They wanted me to ink the New Adventures of Speed Racer. They were in a jam and needed an inker yesterday. The editor went to his office and found my samples on the top of his new mail. So getting work is knowing people and getting your stuff in their hands.*

*2) Preston Rollins, Michael Bair, Cam Smith, Mark Farmer, John Dell, Don Hillsman II, just to name a few. There are so many great inkers that most of their names escape me. I study every good inker I find. Taking something away from each of them. But I learned the most from looking at Terry Austin's stuff during the eighties when I was growing up.*

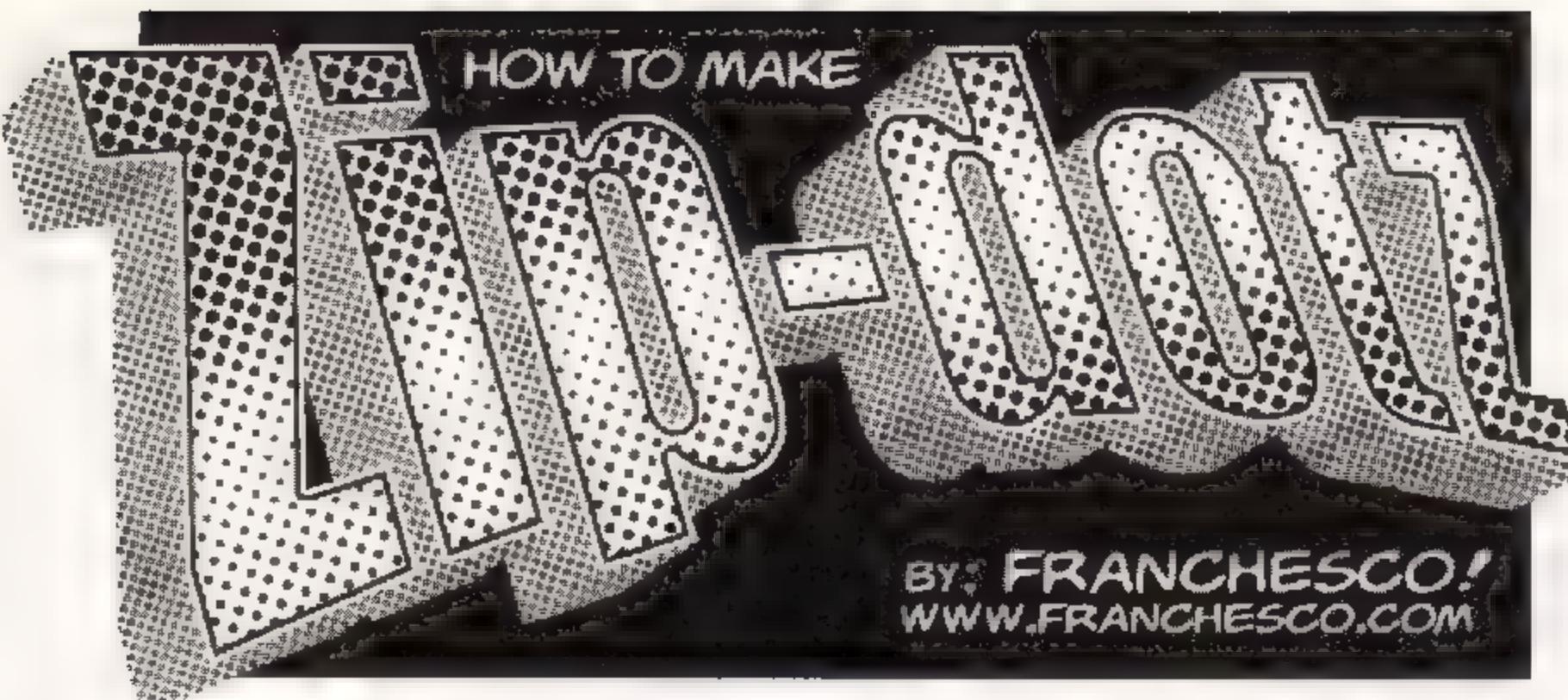
*3) An inker's average speed should be about a page/day. This way you can get a 22 page comic done within a month with time to spare. I try to do about a page and a half. I'm up early and inking by 8:30-9:00. I know you're now wondering; it takes me between 4-8 hours to do a page (depending on the page of course).*

*4) Dark Horse paper is Strathmore 500 bristol, which Blue Line Pro does carry. Personally I use Strathmore 300 bristol on my own projects. I hope this helps.*

*5) I would recommend going to a con. Bring your work and talk to artists. Hold off going to editors until artist after artist tells you that they see nothing wrong with your work, then go see editors. I think that's your best bet, Robert. In one day at a con you could talk to 10 to 15 artists (depending on the size of the con). It's good to talk face to face and ask questions, plus cons are fun!*

*Thanks again, Robert, for the letter. Remember, practice, practice, practice!*

Chris



## It's Super-easy!

Meet your new best friend for Zip-dotz; Photoshop's Color Halftone filter is a party waiting to happen. This dynamic filter divides the selected area of the image into rectangles, and replaces the rectangles with a circle in the blink of an eye. The circle size is proportional to the brightness of the rectangle. It's some kinda strange Voo-doo if you ask me, but I love the way it works its magic.

Hey there everybody...PC guy here. Aside from the keyboard shortcuts - 'Command' this as opposed to 'Control' that; making Zip-dotz on a Mac should be similar. These basic steps will apply for anyone using Photoshop 6.0

### GET READY TO RUMBLE:

On your marks .. Get set.. Draw! Scan your new masterpiece as a 600dpi Grayscale image. Sure you can go smaller, but I don't recommend it. I prefer to work at 600dpi, then (if necessary) size it down to 400dpi for Print, or 72dpi for Web.

### Create Zip Layer (under artwork) ...

- In your Toolbar-
- 1 Choose Layers> Duplicate Layer
- 2 Duplicate As: "ART Layer"
- 3 Click OK.
- In your layers palette-
- 4 Click on the 'Background' layer.
- In your Toolbar-
- 5 Choose Layers> New> Layer from Background Name: "ZIP Layer" for obvious reasons...Heh heh
- 6 Click OK

### PC Super-Speed Tip:

**[Alt+Delete]** . to fill selection with Foreground color.  
**[Ctrl+Delete]** ...to fill selection with Background color.

**Fill 'ZIP Layer' 20%BLACK (gray)...**  
 Confirm you're working in the ZIP Layer and if Foreground Color is 100%Black)

Or keyboard shortcut [Alt+Delete] with 20%Black Foreground color.

Now comes the fun part ...drum roll ...  
**Apply Halftone Filter...** rim shot!!!

- In your Toolbar-
- 1 Choose Filter> Pixelate> Color Halftone
- 2 Enter a value in pixels for the maximum radius of a halftone dot, from 4 to 127 ... blah blah blah.. Pick a number, any number. Lets go with 10
- 3 Click OK!
- Woo-Hoo! Lotsa Zip-dotz!!!

### PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

#### Cut out Pixels in 'Art Layer'...

- In your layers palette-
- 1 Click on the 'Art Layer'
- In your Tools Palette-
- 2 Click the Marquee tool, or Lasso tool, or MagicWand. (Whatever tool does the trick, that's the one for me!) My choice today is the MagicWand. Saying "Abra-



"Cadabra" before clicking with this tool is not necessary, but knock yourself out if that floats your boat

**3 Select areas in 'Art Layer' where you want zip to show through.**

- In your Toolbar-
- 4 Choose Edit> Cut

Or keyboard shortcut [Control+X]  
I love this part ...YOU GOT DOTZ!!!  
Easy as pie, and everybody loves pie!

The 'Zip Layer' below the 'Art Layer' will now show through only in the places where you want it to. Erasing pixels with the Eraser tool in smaller areas might work better than the MagicWand tool. If you accidentally cut out an area where you don't want Zip-dotz to show through, just paint over the area in the 'Art Layer' with white or black using your Brush tool (depending on what the color used to be before you —oops!.. removed it). Results will vary if you change the Color Halftone "8 Pixels" default setting. For sake of clarity, consistency, and ease, I prefer to change the variable in the way I'll FILL the selected area before applying this filter. Want bigger dots that are closer together? Can do. just darken the gray. Easy as, ahem—yeah, you guessed it; pie. Yumm...PIE!!! Not only is it easier and more versatile to use a separate layer for your Zip-dotz, but you will also get cleaner edges around the selected areas in your 'Art Layer'

#### VERSATILITY:

Your publisher wants the final art at 300dpi, or 72dpi, or whatever (your larger working document is at 600dpi). When the file size is made smaller, the Zip-dotz may be affected—the look you were going for gone!

#### Quick (zip) 'Fix'...

Resize Document (if necessary)

1 GO to the 'ZIP Layer'

2 FILL [Alt+Delete] foreground gray.

3 APPLY Color Halftone Filter.

One, two, three —flawless perfection made easy!!! Voila ... new Zip-dotz made to order, extra cheese not included. So much easier to quickly change the 'ZIP Layer' (or a selected portion) as opposed to having to go back in and mask, or select, or lasso, or paint, or erase, or curse at each and every little pixel in every little nook and cranny that would have 'Zip-dotz' in the 'Art Layer'.

You want the art to be in full color now, and don't want 'zip' in it anymore? Easy as ... ah-yup, you know it —PIE!!! Go to the 'ZIP Layer' and FILL with 100% white, save a copy, flatten image, and presto-o-change-o, no more Zippy-zip!

What— your art director calls you and says "change back to Zipped version for



STORY & ART: FRANCESCO

Note how the lettering 'pops' more the splash at her feet, and energy flares visually separate instantly from all the hair with the Quick N' Easy Zip-dotz!

a black and white promo-Piece" You (gaspl!) don't have a version of the original file anymore? (Oh yeah, like that's never happened before) <grin> Go back to the (now white) 'ZIP Layer' Doc and apply the Quick (zip) 'Fix'... in the blink of an eye—Hello Zip-dotz! Changes are fast & easy

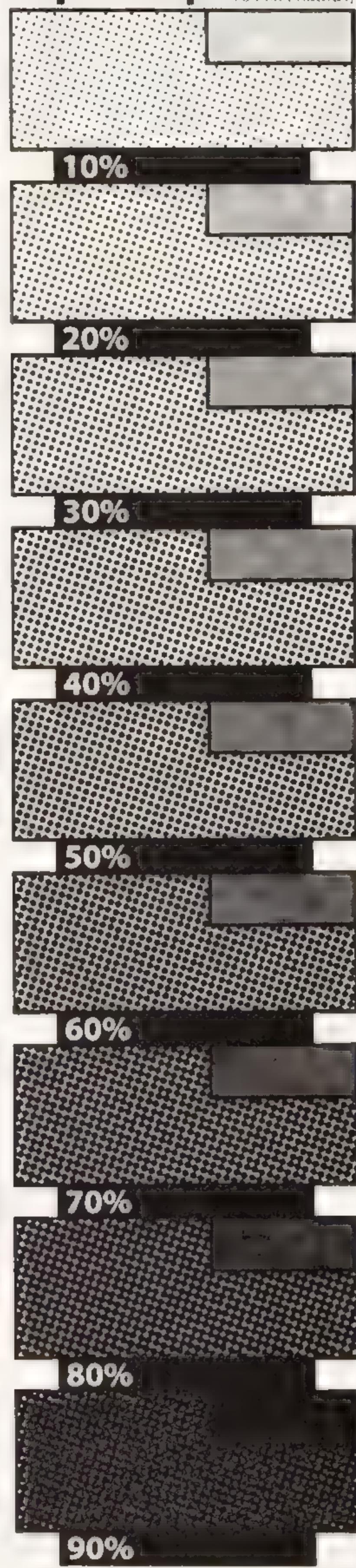
No more X-acto knives! No more expensive contact paper sticking to your fingers, or pulling chunks off the surface of your original art (if you didn't position it right on the first try). No more hunting for dried up sheets of Zip-a-Tone collecting

dust somewhere! Besides, once you stuck it on your art . it was there forever (where it started to shrink or turn yellow). No more pretty original art; thanx to evil Zip-Clingy-Tone . bah-hum-bug!

It's no wonder they don't make those sticky sheets of 'Zip' anymore. Like so many other tasks—it's faster, cleaner, and much easier getting the same effect using computers. Photoshop does the trick, and you don't have to make a life long commitment to it. Heh heh — I'm all over that!!!

## Zip-Strip

[10 Pixel Radius]



If sticking with pure black & white art is not the way you wanna go every time, if you would rather dive into the shifting shades of gray between ..Zip-dotz are one way you can do just that! The Reference Str p clearly illustrates how different shades of gray will transform into dynamic Zip-dotz! Experiment with different filter settings applied to various

combinations of black & white & the shifting shades of grays between Although our Zip-dotz won't be doing a whole lot of actual shifting— and nope, hitting the 'Shift key' won't make the dots dance the Polka either!

Have fun!!!



**ZIP-DOTZ  
GALORE!!!**

Hey, Hotshot...want a different look instead of the continuous, even-sized series of dots, or flat sections of gray fills? Can do!!!

It's quick n' easy! Go back to the same "variables" place (the way you fill the selected area before applying the Color Halftone filter). By filling the area a solid 20% black (gray) like before, then adding a gradual 'fade' effect, or add white highlights with the airbrush tool, and/or add shadows with black. Have fun & experiment. Apply the Color Halftone filter and you get awesome Zip-dotz! Smaller dots where it's lightest, bigger dots where it's the darkest ... SO FREAKING COOL! Easy, custom-made 'zip,' just the way we like it. Try it... it's FUN!!!

**-Francesco!**

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# TIPS FROM SIZER FOR BETTER Comics

## "THE PROCESS OF PIN-UPS"

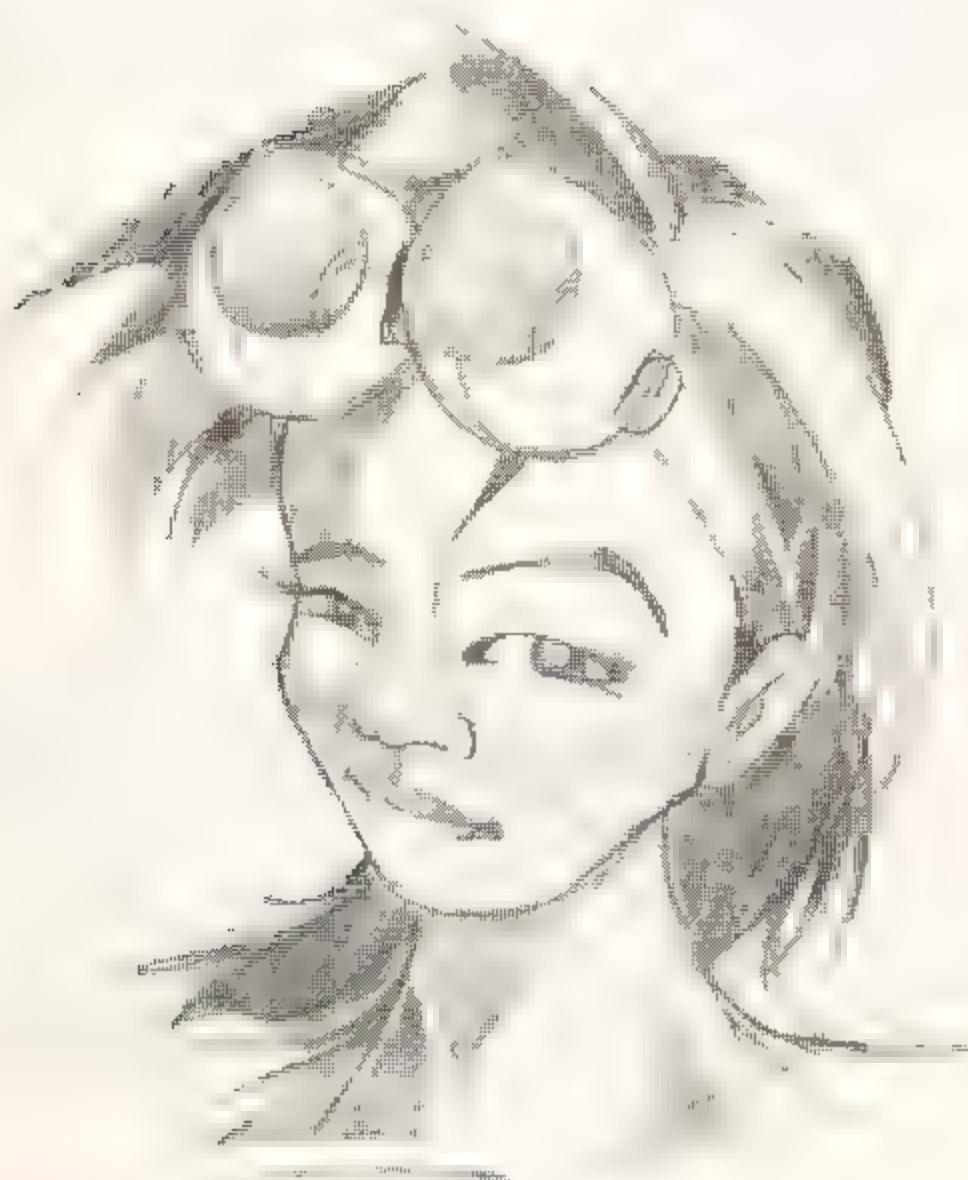
by Paul Sizer

*This Month:*

Hello again, fellow comic craftspersons! Today we'll take a step-by-step stroll through the process I go through for creating a pin-up illustration. Process is an important element in how an artist works, because it allows the artist a framework within which to make decisions and changes to improve and perfect the idea in their heads. I try to go through a process in any artistic job I do, comic or design related. It helps me find flaws and correct them, and allows me to be objective about how good the results are. As most comic artists work solo, process helps you to objectively assess if you've done what you set out to accomplish. In each step of this pin-up of Captain Whitey (Loo's future self) we'll look at what works, what doesn't, and how I tried to fix it or make it better.

### INITIAL PENCIL ROUGHS

I always start out with a pencil and paper, even when I'm doing design work. Jumping right to your computer or illustration paper doesn't let you figure out basic things and experiment. I had a basic idea of what pose I wanted to go for, but at this point was still trying out different angles and body positions. Sometimes I'll use reference material to figure out a "look" I want for a pose; in this case a trading card of Jessica Alba as DARK ANGEL was my initial attitude/pose reference. At this point I'm not focusing on tiny details, but rather getting the "gesture" of the pose down, including how the body is balanced on itself. A good rule to follow is "Always work general to specific." That way you won't be worrying about rendering a character's fingernails before you get the feel of the entire pose.



### HEAD STUDY

Because the face and eyes convey so much of the attitude and feeling that your character will have, I like to do a quick head study to mess around with how the eyes will work, expression shown through the mouth, and ideas about how the hair will highlight the face. In this drawing I was happy with the general face, but decided the tilt of the head made the eyes look odd and strained, so I elected to make the tilt of the head less severe.



### COSTUME ROUGHS

Before I got too far on the drawing, I wanted to figure out how Whitey would be dressed. I liked the bare midriff motif, along with lots of leather. The pants would be tighter, shinier leather, and the jacket would be bulkier, loose fitting leather to allow for nice folds and ripples. Figuring out the heavy leather jacket helped me to figure out how her arms would lay next to her body. I also wanted Whitey's hands resting on the top of her beltline to frame her stomach area. Her head in this drawing was too "straight-on", so I decided to turn it just slightly in the next revision of the drawing. I also wanted to make her legs less spread out, and make her stance less awkward and more relaxed.



### BLUE LINE PENCIL DRAWING

Since I ink my own work, I rarely do super tight pencils. For this exercise, I wanted to pay a lot of attention to making the pencils very close to how I wanted the inked version to look. I used some photo reference on Whitey's hands to make sure they looked right and laid along her hip line naturally. I got the head tilt like I wanted it to look, and I added the side holster and raygun to balance out the composition. The only thing I radically changed between this pencil drawing and the inked version was fixing Whitey's right arm, making it jut out a little more naturally with how her hand rested upon her hip. The foreshortening of that arm, while technically correct, looked weird and stumpy.



### INKED DRAWING

Even for things that I know are going to be colored, I always try to make them work in black and white only first. Inking is where I spot my blacks and determine light source, shadows and highlights. I made the reflections/highlights on Whitey's pants and midriff shirt longer and smoother to give the effect of them being made of shiny, slick leather. The highlighting and shading on the jacket is more compacted and feathered to give it a more textured look. When drawing female figures, I tend to leave the bare skin and face pretty simple and free of lines to maintain a more youthful look.



### FLAT COLORS

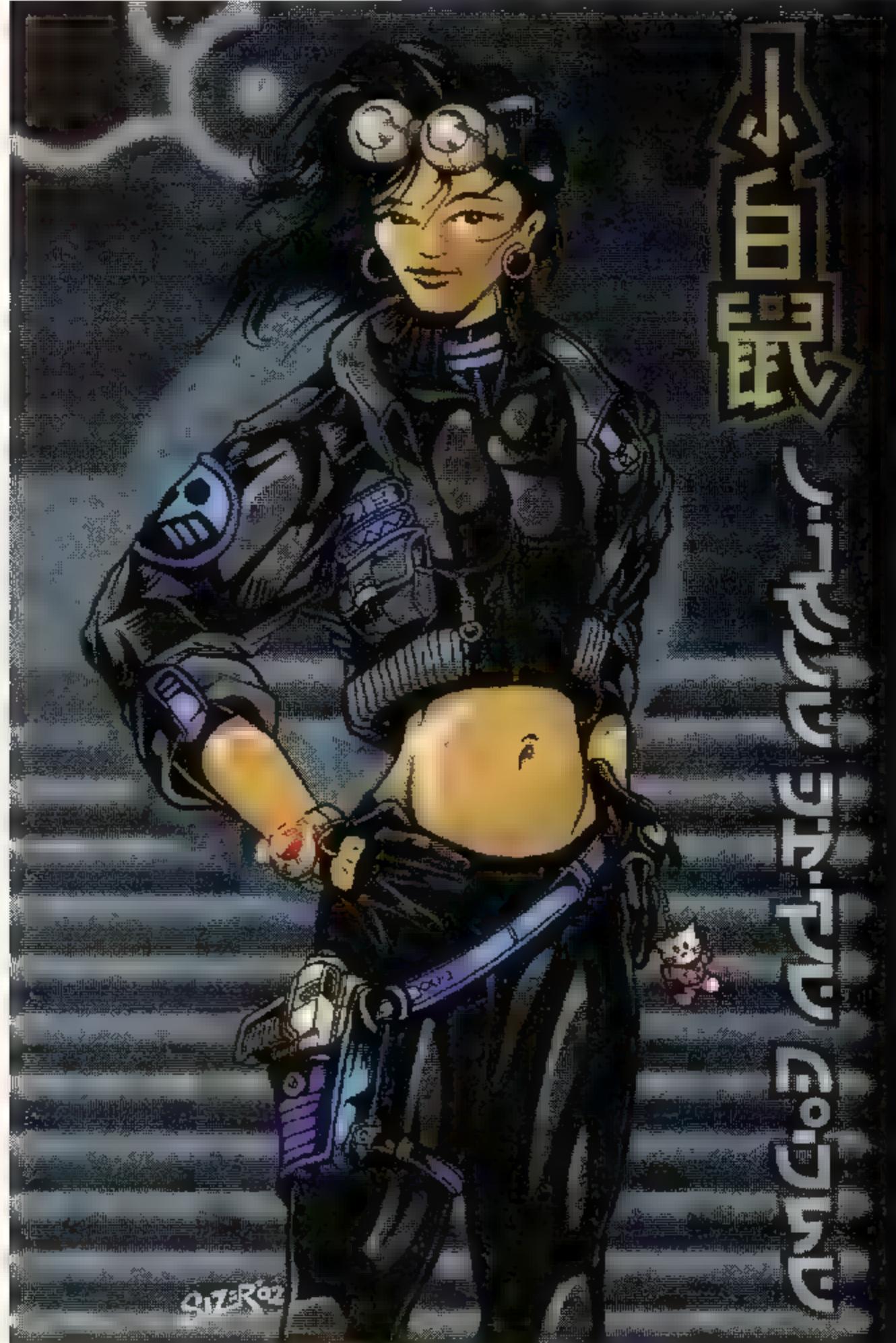
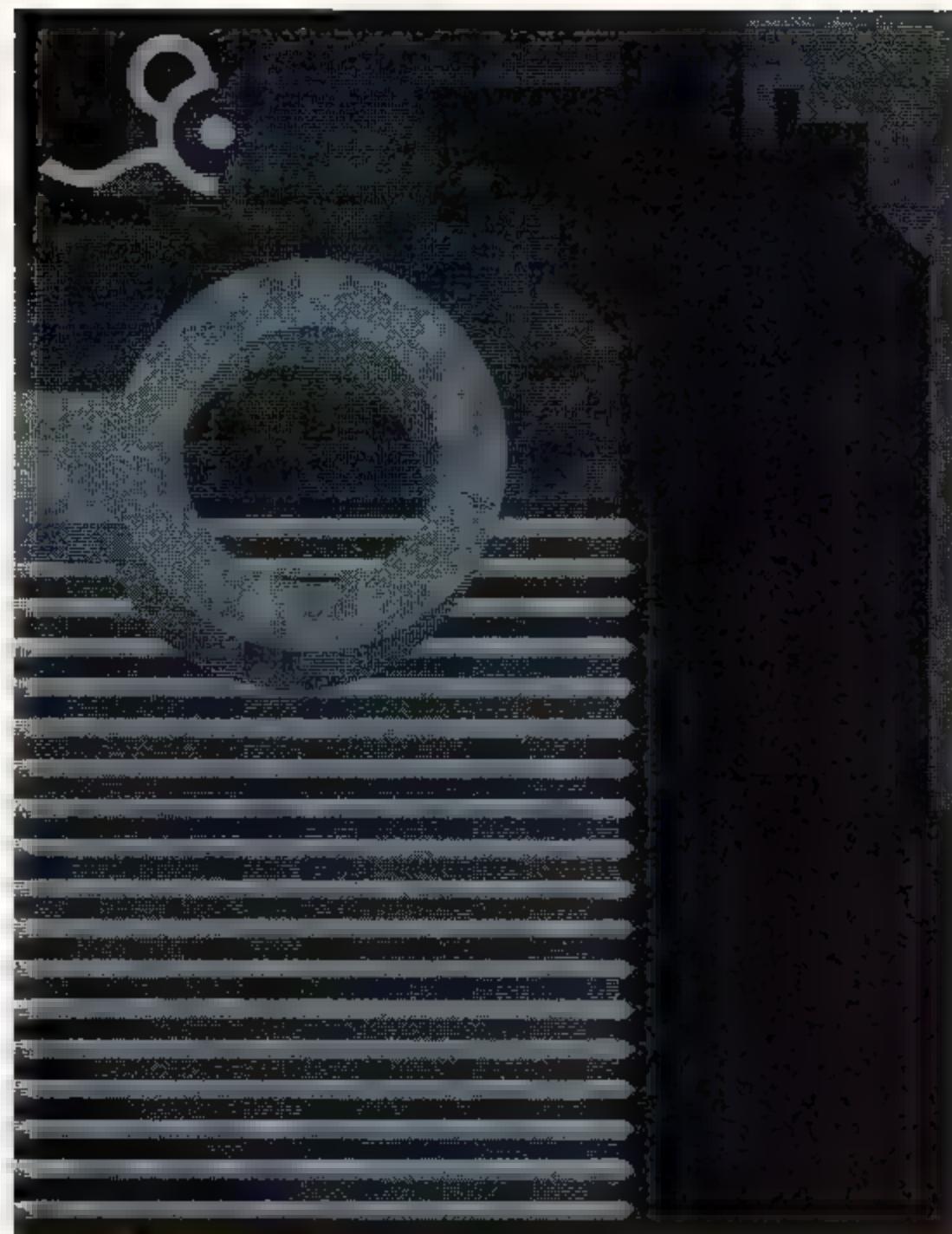
After I scan the inked drawing into PhotoShop 6.0 as a line art(bitmap mode TIFF at 600 dpi), I size it to the final print size and res it down to 300 dpi before converting it first to greyscale, then to CMYK format. For this drawing I'm not working in channels, so I set all my tools to the "darken" mode so they don't affect the black line art, and start filling in my areas with flat color using the Paint Bucket tool. If there are areas I want to fill that aren't closed shapes, I just take my Pencil tool and draw a line in the color that I'm filling the shape with to close it off. My preference is to lay in flats of the mid-tones of the colors, knowing that I will be coming in and adding shadows and highlight areas in my next pass.

## BACKGROUND GRAPHICS

For this pin-up, I elected to make the background a very graphically rendered pattern/design. I created the background in Macromedia Freehand 10 as a flat vector drawing. I created the color palette from color combinations in my PhotoShop document. When I was done, I exported the graphic as an EPS file, and opened it in Photoshop as a CMYK file at 300 dpi. From there I copied the entire graphic and pasted it into a layer behind the line art layer in my main PhotoShop file.

## RENDERING SHADOWS AND LIGHT

Now my main PhotoShop file has a line art/color layer, a layer containing the background graphic, and a layer holding some type/logo elements I've brought in. So I can concentrate on my rendering I turn off the layers, except for the line/color layer, and begin coloring. Since I have flat color tones I can select them with the Magic Wand tool, and begin shading and highlighting without worrying about affecting other areas around it. I can then begin using either the Airbrush tool or the Gradient Fill



### ADDED BONUS

Now that you've seen how this pin-up was created, you can have one of your own. This pin-up will be offered along as a free added bonus with the purchase of the LITTLE WHITE MOUSE PERFECT COLLECTION #2 trade paperback if you order directly from Blue Line Pro.

tool to make my shadings or highlights. Again, make sure you know where your light source(s) are in your picture and stick to them! When I'm finished with the highlights/shadow work, I do my lighting effects on top of everything (glare on Whitey's goggles, strobes from her watch). I then activate the other layers, position elements like I want them, blur the background layer, make the type/logo layer 60% transparent, and when I'm happy, flatten all the layers and save the entire file as a TIFF (.tif) file. (Since this file will be printed, I saved it as a CMYK format TIFF.)

### FINAL NOTES

And there you have it, a finished pin-up, ready to print out. Obviously I omitted a ton of technique explanations about drawing, inking and digital coloring to better discuss the overall process of getting from start to finish. Each step allowed me ample opportunities to change things, fix screw-ups, or just experiment. Keeping things loose like this gives you more chances to perfect your drawings to get them exactly like you want them. Even as I get faster and more proficient in my drawing skills, I still make myself go through a process to allow myself the ability to fix and change things, rather than get to the final piece and say to myself, "Jeez, I wished I'd have figured out how that hand was supposed to look before I inked it." Most of the pros I talk to have a process that allows them to check their work and produce their best stuff. The trick is to get faster, but still be as thorough with your process. And that's just time on your part. So get out there and find your process for perfection! Or at least somewhere nearer to perfection...

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# AARON HÜBRICH'S DIGITAL COLORS

## CHANNELS

### Setting Up Your Art to Digital Color

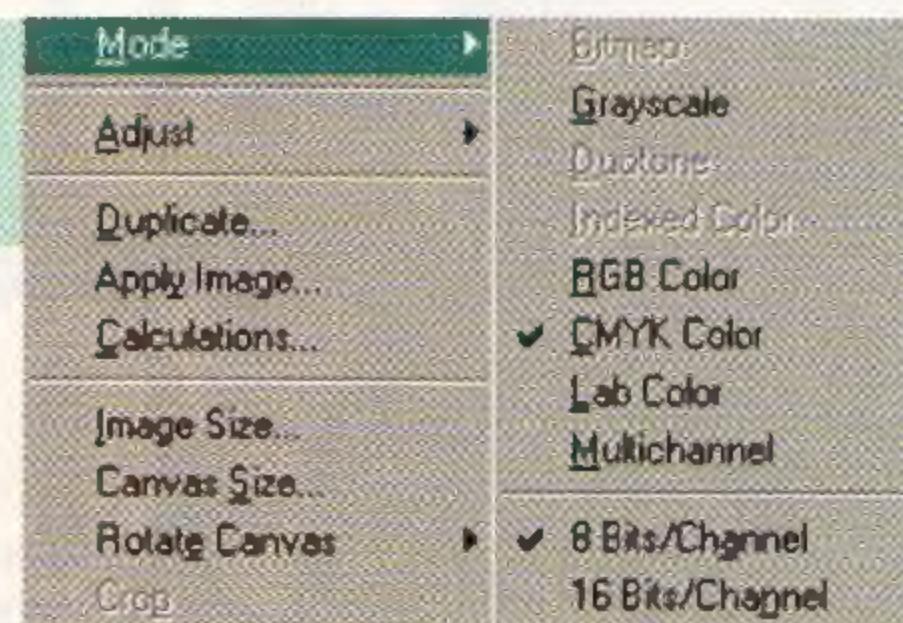
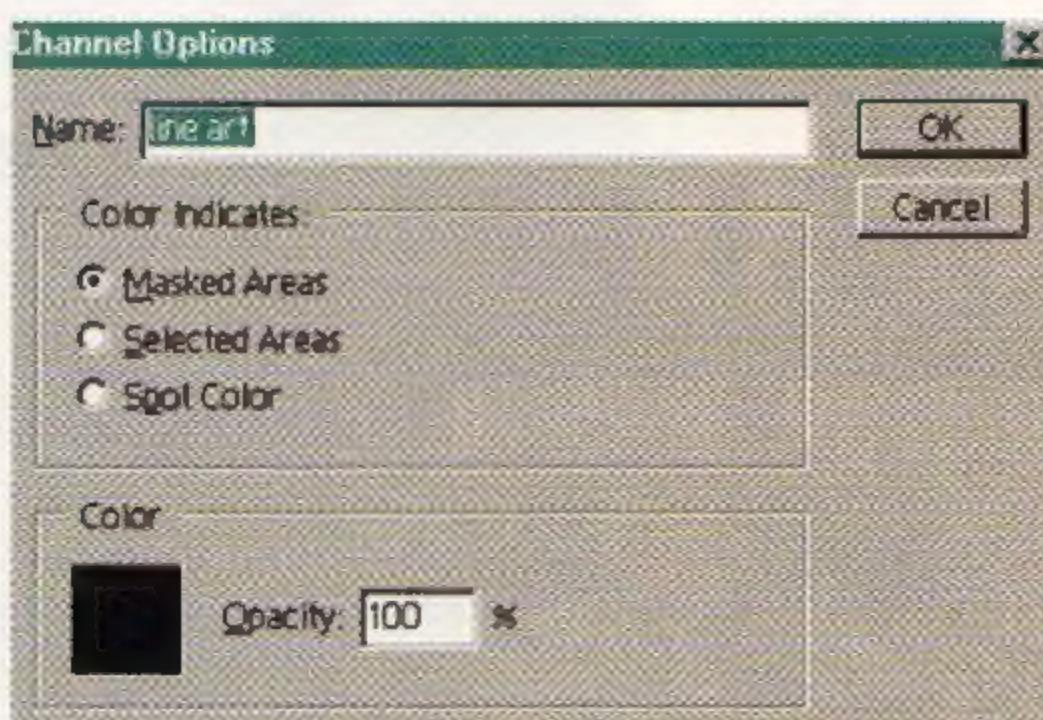
If there is a standard in the industry for coloring comics, it is the use of channels. It is, by far, the most efficient way.

Every Photoshop image has one or more channels, each storing information about color elements in the image. The number of channels in an image depends on its color mode. For example, a CMYK image has at least four channels. One each for cyan, magenta, yellow, and black information. Think of a channel as a plate in the printing process, with a separate plate applying each layer of color. In addition to these default color channels, extra channels, called alpha channels, can be added to an image for storing and editing selections as masks. They save on file sizes, and allow users to send smaller files by way of the internet.

This is important to many studios, because it eliminates the necessity of having a large staff of employees under one roof. For example: Studio A in California hires Colorist X in New York to do flat color work for them. Colorist X receives the color guide and line art file from Studio A. Colorist X sends the completed flat channel back to Studio A via email or by mail/parcel service so they can apply the cuts and finishes.

In this section we are going to cover everything in detail. Most Photoshop users are familiar with working in layers (which is fine), but once you see how channels work, you may never go back to those memory-hogging layers again! Channels work great when there are several artists involved, allowing it to be a more efficient process for everyone associated with the comic book production.

Open your line art that you've scanned. Make sure it's clean and ready to work on. If it is still a bitmap image, make sure your image is set to 300 dpi (Image>Image Size). Convert it to Greyscale, then to CMYK (Image>Mode>Grayscale/Image>Mode>CMYK).



Go to Select>All. Go to Edit>Copy. To the right of the Layers tab is the Channels tab. Click on it, and it should reveal 5 "layers" (CMYK, C, M, Y, & K). In the top right corner, a button will open up a menu allowing you to make a New Channel. When the window pops up you may name this "line art" or whatever you want. Make sure the Color Indicates Masked Areas is checked. Make sure the color is pure black (100% CMYK), and also be sure the opacity is 100%. Click OK. The area selected should go black. Go to Edit>Paste; you should now see your line art. Go to Select>Deselect.

You now have a space to apply your color. One could work with the line art in the CMYK channel space - just using quick fills with the bucket tool. But with efficient flatting techniques, sometimes those time saving ideas on the front end make it a time consuming task for the person(s) doing the cuts or finishing work. I'm going to show you how to do flats in sections, starting from the back and moving forward. It's the most efficient way, and will build a solid foundation for knowing that with rock solid flats, you can really do quality work much quicker.

The first step: make sure your foreground color is set to white. Click on the CMYK channel layer and make sure they all highlight. Go to Edit>Fill. We're filling our CMYK channel with white to work on. If all you see is a white space, go back to the Channel tab and click on the space where the eyeball should be next to the "line art" channel. You should see your lines now. Click on the CMYK channel and experiment a little using a color, applying it with a brush. You'll see now that the line art is unaffected by the color.

#### Know your tools!

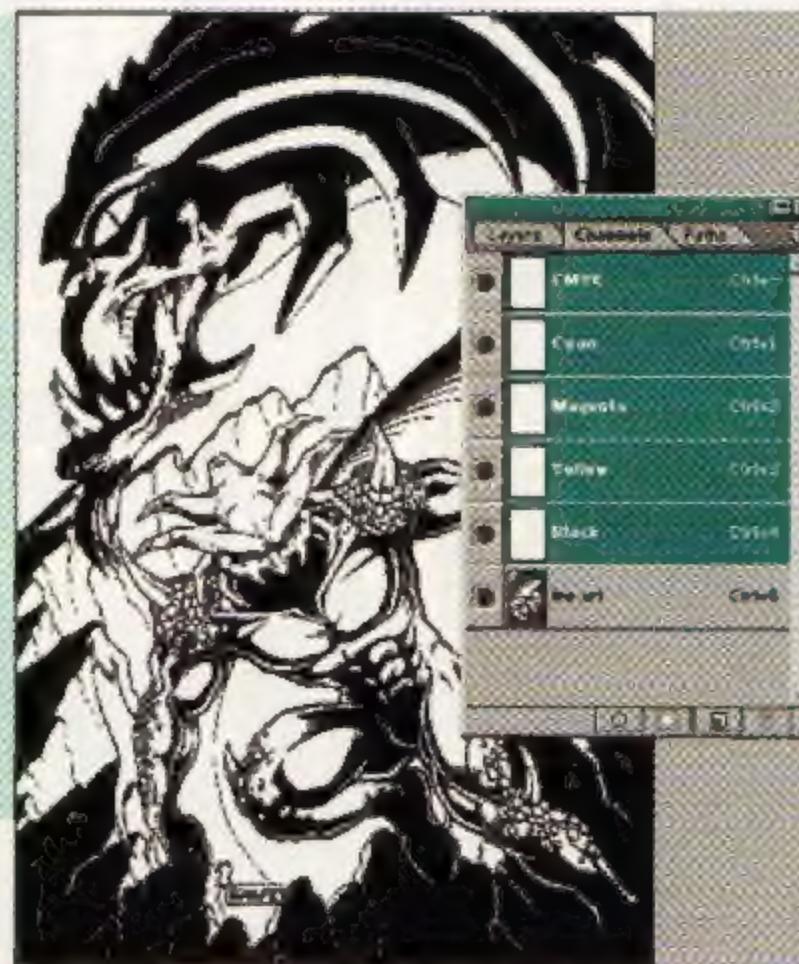
Your weapons of choice for applying the flat colors are: the Lasso tool, Polygonal Lasso tool, the Paintbucket tool, and the Paintbrush tool. All of these tools should be set up properly. None of the Lasso tools or Paintbucket tool should be set up with "anti-aliasing" on. Make sure it is NOT checked on. Anti-aliasing is bad news. It may cause the work to appear fuzzy, or even make a light halo effect around all your edges.

The Lasso tool allows you to make a freeform selection, but you have to have a steady hand. It's great to select large areas. Once you have an area selected a marquee will appear, allowing you to fill it with a selected color. Pick your color, and choose the Paintbucket tool. Click in the area of the marquee and it will fill up that space with the color you selected.

The same applies to the Polygonal Lasso tool, but it gives you a bit more control. It's called "constraining" your selection. This allows you to click around an object, giving you more precision in making your shape. Once your shape is made it will also make a marquee, allowing you to fill it with color using the Paintbucket tool.

Your Paintbrush tool can be used to fill in gaps, and correct mistakes or holes in your flat laying.

- Aaron



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